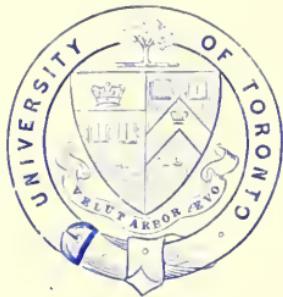




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NOTES ON THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM COLLINS.

by

P. L. CAHIER

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NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

IT is commonly stated, on the ultimate authority of Dallaway,¹ the historian of Western Sussex, that the Collins family had been established in Chichester for several generations as respectable tradesmen, and attempts have been made to show that a certain Richard Collins, who paid hearth-tax for a house in South Street in 1670, was the poet's grandfather,² and a certain Thomas Collins, Mayor of the city in 1619, a direct ancestor.³ All this may be dismissed as empty conjecture. We shall find sufficient reason to believe that Collins's grandfather was Roger Collins, who, according to such evidence as is available, was a native of Essex. Wherever he may have originated, Roger Collins was neither a tradesman nor, let us hope, respectable; for the epithet was not usually applied to the Anglican clergy, even in the seventeenth century, unless its appropriateness in a particular case had been called in question.

Roger Collins has a place of his own, though a small one, in the history of his adopted county, and must be well known by name to the more active members of the Sussex Archaeological Society. According to the record on his tombstone he died on Nov. 21, 1707, at the age of eighty-three, which indicates 1624 as the date of his birth. How and where he spent his youth is, so far, a mystery. He was certainly a staunch Anglican, and therefore, presumably, a Royalist; and it would not be surprising to discover that he had fought for the King in the Civil War and had afterwards maintained some kind of passive resistance to the Puritan domination.⁴ He has not been traced among the graduates of any university, and it was not till after the Restoration, when he must have been about thirty-six years of age, that he prepared to take Orders. He was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Chichester on Nov. 28, 1662, admitted vicar choral of the Cathedral on Jan. 20, 1662/3, and ordained priest a month later.⁵

The year 1662 is memorable for the Act of Uniformity, which had the effect of expelling some two thousand of the Puritan clergy from the Church. Of those who remained there cannot have been many having qualifications in music, and Roger Collins, as both a "singing man" and a person suitable for

ordination, must have been a valuable recruit. Within a few years he collected an impressive number of pluralities. He was rector of St. Olave's, Chichester,⁶ as well as vicar choral of the Cathedral, from 1662 until his death; rector of Rumboldswyke from 1670 to 1693; rector of East Wittering from 1688 to 1707, resigning a few weeks before his death; vicar of Hunston (united, then as now, with North Mundham) for the last year of his life; and sequestrator⁷ of St. Andrew's, Chichester, for the last seven years.⁸ On Feb. 26, 1664, at the village of Tangmere, in Sussex, he married Wilmot Duffield,⁹ a resident of Tangmere, though probably not a native. The husband is described as "of the Close of the Cathedral Church of Chichester, Clerk," and we know on other authority that he still occupied a house in the Cathedral Close in 1670, and was liable for hearth tax.¹⁰ It is probable that he continued to live there for the greater part of his life, and that that is the house in which his grandson died in 1759. Apparently he was in residence at Hunston during his short period of office as vicar, as he described himself as "of Hunston" in his will, and his daughter Judith was married there; but he was not appointed to Hunston until Nov. 13, 1706, almost exactly a year before his death.

Wilmot Collins died Jan. 13, 1692/3, and was buried in St. Olave's Church.¹¹ There, nearly fifteen years later, her husband also was buried. It appears from the inscription on the tomb that he claimed a coat-of-arms, described thus: "Vert, a gryphon segreant or with a molet for difference. *Collins*. Impaling: Argent a chevron sable between three Cornish choughs."¹² A griffin segreant or, on a field vert, is distinctive of the ancient family of Collins or Collin (subject to much variation of spelling) of Kent and Essex;¹³ and we learn from the pedigree that Edward Collin or Collen, second son of William of that name, of Beauchamp Roding, in Essex, had a son Roger, who appears, so far as we can tell in the absence of exact dates, to be of the same generation as the Roger Collins who afterwards appeared in Sussex.¹⁴ It is probable that the two were identical. The impaled arms resemble those of the Duffields of Buckinghamshire,¹⁵ also a family of long descent; and we remember that the maiden name of Roger's wife was Wilmot Duffield.

It is fortunate that the will of Roger Collins has survived,¹⁶ for it goes a long way to establish his identity as the poet's grandfather. His daughter Judith is appointed sole executrix, and is the principal legatee.

He also remembers his son Charles, his son William, William's daughter Elizabeth, and his grandson George Payne.¹⁷ It is easy to discover that the elder son, Charles, was baptized in Chichester Cathedral on Feb. 8, 1665/6.¹⁸ It will be necessary to say more about him at a later stage, but it had better be remarked at once that his will is also extant, and that he is found to have remembered to their advantage his nephews, William Collins and George Payne, "Dr. in Physick," and, much less to their advantage, his nieces, Elizabeth and Anne Collins. Knowing that William Collins the poet had a cousin named George Payne, by profession a doctor, and that his two sisters were named Elizabeth and Anne, we cannot doubt that he is identical with the William Collins named in the will. Still further evidence, if any is required, is afforded by the memorial tablet to several members of the Collins family which was placed in the Church of St. Andrew by the poet's sister Anne, and may still be seen. The arms there displayed are identical with those of Roger Collins, being "Vert, a griffin segreant or."¹⁹

Judith Collins, the elder daughter of Roger, was baptized at the Cathedral on April 17, 1667.²⁰ On Jan. 21, 1706/7, she was married to John Scott, of Eltham, in the County of Kent,²¹ ranking as a "gentleman" according to the strict usage of the period. Whether the marriage was in some way disastrous, or whether the hand of an enemy has been at work, we have no means of knowing; but it is a fact that, opposite the record of the marriage in the Register of Hunston, in ink which shows no sign of fading, are the words "Woeful Day." On Feb. 3, 1708/9, John Scott, this time described as "of the City of Chichester, gentleman," was bound in the sum of £100 for the due performance by his wife of the terms of Roger Collins's will.²² This, taken in conjunction with the note in the Parish Register, can hardly fail to raise an unpleasant suspicion of the character of John Scott; on the other hand, the sums involved are so trifling that it is difficult to see how the executrix or her husband, even if unscrupulous, could have found much scope for irregularity. It is possible that any default there may have been was due to carelessness or laziness.

We know of another daughter who is not mentioned in the will of Roger Collins. Anne, the wife of William Payne, of Midhurst, and mother of George. No record has been discovered of either her baptism or her marriage, and it is probable that both events

took place at St. Olave's, the registers of which, for long periods, are missing. Her name is revealed by the will of her husband, who died in 1723, leaving bequests to his wife Anne Payne, his children, George, William and Anne, and his brother-in-law, "William Collins of the City of Chichester in the said County of Sussex Haberdasher," the latter being appointed executor.²³ The date of the marriage must have been earlier than 1703, as Georgo Payne, in the evidence which he gave before the Barons of the Exchequer in 1737, in the action *Collins versus Diggens*, stated that he was thirty-four years of age at that time.²⁴ We know nothing more of Anne Payne. There is no reason to doubt that she was happy with her husband and her promising sons, unless the habit of giving good advice, which seems to have been a family failing, may sometimes have darkened the domestic scene.

William Collins, whose name has been rescued from oblivion by the genius of his son, was probably the youngest of the family, and certainly the younger son. The date of his birth is unknown, and it is very likely that his baptism, as well as that of his sister Anne, was recorded in the missing register of St. Olave's. According to the memorial tablet in St. Andrew's he died in 1734 at the age of sixty; but as we know the actual date of his death on better authority—Sept. 30, 1733²⁵—we cannot accept the date reached by calculation, 1674, as more than approximately correct. Happily, nothing in the affairs of Collins the poet depends on the exact age of his father.

It was not unusual for the younger son of a country clergyman to go into trade. Though he seems to have grown into a haberdasher by 1720,²⁶ there can be no doubt that the elder William Collins was a hatter in his earlier career, for he is so described not only in the record of his own marriage but also in the records of two other marriages for which he stood as sponsor.²⁷ It is said that John Caryll, the friend of Pope, was one of his customers.²⁸ The site of his shop in East Street, Chichester, is now occupied by a branch of the National Provincial Bank, which is so inconveniently close to the structure of St. Andrew's Church as to raise a suspicion that the ground had been intended originally either to be occupied by a rectory or to be part of the churchyard. However that may be, it is probable that William Collins's choice of premises was in some way connected with his father's tenure of the living of St. Andrew's. In that case

he must have opened his business later than Dec. 20, 1699.

In the Parish Register of Ernley, a village near Chichester, is recorded the marriage on Feb. 13, 1703, of "Mr. Wm. Collins of Chich^r Hatter and Eliz. Martin of West Wittering."²⁹ The bride was the daughter of Edmund and Magdalen Martin of Southcott Farm, in the neighbourhood of Cackham Tower, between East and West Wittering.³⁰ Their elder daughter, Elizabeth, was born in 1704,³¹ in time to ensure for herself the expectation of receiving £15 on her twenty-first birthday: £5 under the will of her grandfather and £10 under that of her maternal grandmother. The second daughter, Anne, was born in 1705 or 1705,³² and grew up with the prospect of being £15 poorer than her sister when she came of age. For many years these were the only children.

The little that we know of the elder William Collins proves that he served his native city conscientiously and with some distinction, though not in such a way as to deserve even a local immortality in his own right. He was mayor of Chichester in 1714,³³ and had, presumably, been elected an alderman at some earlier date. We hear of him in 1716 as one of the city fathers who prepared a dinner to celebrate the visit of the Prince of Wales; when the Prince, having heard of the dinner, changed his route so as to avoid Chichester, and the aldermen consumed the feast themselves.³⁴ In this and the following year, and probably earlier and later, he was one of the churchwardens of St. Peter the Great.³⁵ In 1721 he was mayor of Chichester for the second time,³⁶ and on Jan. 1 of that year, according to the old style of reckoning, his only son, William, was baptized.³⁷

We hear of the elder Collins again in 1727, in connection with a financial transaction which led to litigation with some of his neighbours. The Church of St. Bartholomew had been smashed to pieces in the siege of Chichester during the Civil War, and the ground belonging to the rectory, about 2 acres, was cultivated as farm land.³⁸ About 1682 the Dean and Chapter granted a lease of the property to Paul Burrard, of Lymington, who claimed that his nominal occupancy of the rectory entitled him to tithes to the value of 4s. 4d. a year from every householder in the parish. Burrard had some difficulty in enforcing his claim, "the parishioners," according to Burrell, "pretending they ought not to pay Tythes as they have neither Church nor Minister." The contention seems not unreasonable; but an action at law in 1690³⁹

against some of the defaulters was apparently successful, and all went well for a number of years. In 1727 Alderman Collins acquired a sub-lease of the property⁴⁰ from Burrard's son and successor,⁴¹ and in that year and in 1730 brought actions at law against several of the parishioners to compel the payment of tithes.⁴² In 1735 the second Paul Burrard died,⁴³ and the following year a new lease was granted by Dean Hayley to Elizabeth Collins, the alderman's widow, who thereupon began proceedings on the familiar lines against a merchant, a gardener, an inn-keeper and a private inhabitant.⁴⁴ The depositions in this case are useful for the evidence of George Payne,⁴⁵ who reveals his age among other particulars of himself. The last that we hear of the property in connection with the Collins family is in 1747, when the rights under the lease were sold for £260 to John Backshell and Thomas Ball, "during the lives of Lucy Burrard, widow of Paul Burrard esq. [the second] decsd., Harry Burrard,⁴⁶ son of the said Paul and Lucy, and William Collins, son of Eliz. Collins, widow, deceased, and the life of the longest liver of them."⁴⁷ The value of the tithes according to Burrell, was about £15 a year.⁴⁸

P. L. CARVER.

1. 'A History of the Western Division of the County of Sussex,' by James Dallaway. The book is indispensable for the background of Collins's life, though the account of Collins himself (vol. i., pp. 184-6) is disappointing.

2. William Durrant Cooper in 'Sussex Archaeological Collections,' vol. xxiv., p. 80.

3. W. Moy Thomas, 'Poetical Works of William Collins,' pp. lxi.-lxii.

⁴ That, perhaps, may account for his execrable handwriting, which Mr. W. D. Peckham at first supposed to be that of "Robert Meret alias Mariat a shoomaker and parish Cleark." Before discovering the error Mr. Peckham had expressed the hope that Meret was "more skilful with the awl than with the pen." He adds, however, that "much may be forgiven him for having recorded trades as well as names." (See Mr. Peckham's Introductions to his unpublished transcripts of the Parish Registers of St. Olave's, Chichester, and Rumboldswyke, in the Library of the Society of Genealogists.)

5. B.M. Ad. MS. 39326 (22), ff. 1880-1885. For information about the office of vicar choral see Mr. W. D. Peckham's article on 'Tho Vicars Choral of Chichester Cathedral,' in 'Sussex Archaeological Collections,' vol. lxxviii. pp. 126-159. Roger Collins continued to serve for the rest of his life, being succeeded by Thomas Evans on Jan. 20, 1707/8 (pp. 152-3).

6. For some interesting notes on the history of this church (one of the most ancient in England) see Mr. W. D. Peckham's article, 'The Parishes of the City of Chichester,' in

'Sussex Archaeological Collections,' Vol. lxxiv. (pp. 84-5). It appears that Roger Collins was presented by the Dean and Chapter, who took the patronage into their own hands for the first time on this occasion.

7 That is, vicar of the parish for all practical purposes, but there must have been a doubt whether the living was technically vacant. In such cases it was usual to grant a "sequestration" of the fruits of the benefice.

8 Ad. MS. 39326 (22), ff. 1878, etc.

9 *Ibid.* ff. 1879 and 1882.

10 William Durrant Cooper in 'Sussex Archaeological Collections,' Vol. xxiv., p. 84.

11 Ad. MSS. 39326 (22), f. 1879, and 5699, f. 177.

12 Ad. MS. 5699, f. 177. See also Fane Lambarde in 'Sussex Archaeological Collections,' Vol. lxxiv., p. 193.

13 Harl. MS. 5181, p. 6. Illustrated in Ad. MS. 14307, f. 10v.

14 Harl. MS. 1398, f. 5. See also Harl. MS. 1541, f. 224v.

15 Illustrated in Harl. MS. 1533, f. 49.

16 See the collection of Chichester Wills in the District Probate Registry, Winchester. Summarised Ad. MS. 39416 A.

17 So persistent is the belief that George Payne was related to Collins on the Martin side that Bloxam ('A Register of Saint Mary Magdalen College in the University of Oxford,' Vol. vi., p. 255) even invents a genealogical table showing an unnamed sister of Elizabeth Martin as the wife of William Payne of Midhurst. Bloxam is indebted to the "valuable Memoir" of Moy Thomas, but has improved upon his original.

18 Ad. MSS. 39326 (22), f. 1879; 5699, f. 189v.

19 See Ad. MS. 5699, f. 176. The mullet "for difference" in the arms of Roger Collins is the sign of a third or fourth son, and would not be transmuted to descendants.

20 Ad. MSS. 39326 (22), f. 1879; 5699, f. 183.

21 *Ibid.* See also 'Sussex Marriage Licences' (Sussex Record Society), p. 131.

22 Ad. MS. 39326 (22), f. 1892.

23 See the collection of Chichester Wills in the District Probate Registry, Winchester. Summarised Ad. MS. 39416 A.

24 P.R.O. E. 133/37/76.

25 So it was stated by his widow in the action Collins *versus* Diggens, but the decisive fact is that his will was proved on Nov. 5, 1733.

26 According to the will, already quoted, of William Payne, his brother-in-law, which is dated Aug. 15, 1720, and was proved on March 7, 1723.

27 Those of John Groome, of West Grinstead, on April 27, 1711, and Randall Stanton, of Havant, on Jan. 10, 1711/12. See 'Sussex Marriage Licences' (Sussex Record Society), pp. 188 and 192.

28 The statement seems to rest on the authority of Moy Thomas alone, 'Poetical Works of William Collins,' 1866, p. xii., note). It is unfortunate that no reference is given to the "frequent entries" in Caryll's accounts reading "To Collins of Chichester for a hat." Presumably the accounts in question are those now in the British Museum.

²⁹ Ad. MS. 5699, f. 221. For the licence see Ad. MS. 39456, f. 59.

³⁰ Mr. Curtis, Churchwarden of West Wittering, re-discovered in 1937, in the course of some alterations, a grave in the church, covered by a stone slab, which had been forgotten for an indefinite time. The inscription is remarkably clear, and reads:

"Here Lyeth the Body of Edmund Martin
of Southcott in this Parish he
Deceast December the 18th 1704.
Also Magdalen the Wife of the said
Edm. Martin she died May the 20th
Anno. 1705."

Those are Collins's maternal grandparents.

³¹ Baptized at St. Peter the Great on March 6. Ad MS. 5699, f. 184.

³² The date of Anne's birth seems to rest on tradition alone, but in this case the tradition cannot be far wrong.

³³ Hay, 'History of Chichester,' p. 572.

³⁴ 'Sussex Archaeological Collections,' Vol. xix, p. 147.

³⁵ Ad. MS. 39461, f. 105.

³⁶ Hay, 'History of Chichester,' p. 572.

³⁷ Register of St. Peter the Great Chichester.

³⁸ Dallaway, *op cit.*, Vol. i., p. 171; Burrell's notes in Ad. MS. 5689, f. 21.

³⁹ P.R.O. E. 112/749/19.

⁴⁰ According to Mrs. Collins, who told the Court of Exchequer in her action against Diggens and others that her husband took over the lease from Burrard on 10 March, 1727; but Collins himself had told the same Court in 1730 that he had held the lease for seven years or thereabouts.

⁴¹ Paul Burrard the elder had died in 1706. See Sir Sidney Burrard's 'The Families of Borard and Burrard,' p. x.

⁴² P.R.O. E. 112/1301/7; E. 112/1301/43.

⁴³ 'The Families of Borard and Burrard,' p. x.

⁴⁴ P.R.O. E. 112/1302/54. For the Depositions see E. 134/11 George II, Mich. 8. Dallaway (Vol. i., p. 195, note b) refers to a slight summary of the case of "Collins v. Digons" in Hutton Wood's 'Tythe Cases' (Vol. iv., p. 568), but does not mention the plaintiff's relationship to Collins the poet.

⁴⁵ P.R.O. E. 133/37/76.

⁴⁶ Afterwards Sir Harry Burrard, distinguished as a general. He lived till 1791. It is probable that the Burrard family papers, which were dispersed in 1885, contained relics of Collins or of the Collins family. Colonel Sir Sidney Burrard allows it to be stated that he knows nothing of the disposal of these papers as he was in India when the sale took place, and did not succeed to the title till many years later.

⁴⁷ P.R.O. C.P. 25 (2) 1224, Hil. 21 Geo. II.

⁴⁸ Ad. MS. 5689, f. 21.

(To be continued.)

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* p. 128.)

HAVING so far prepared the way before and after, we are free to turn to the career of the poet himself. It has come to be generally believed, and is sometimes stated as if it were an ascertained fact, that Collins received the first part of his education at the Prebendal School, Chichester. There is no evidence for that assumption, and it has not even the appearance of probability. The Prebendal School was a charitable foundation for the benefit of a limited number of children whose parents could not afford the cost of education; and it is equally unlikely that an alderman and former mayor would have allowed his son to be nominated in competition with the genuinely poor and that, if the nomination had been proposed, the trustees would have approved the election. The function equivalent to that of a preparatory school was usually performed in the eighteenth century by the poorer clergy, and the probability is that Collins learnt his letters at home and was afterwards taught for three or four years by some curate in the neighbourhood.

With the real beginning of his education we are on firmer ground. In 1733, the year in which his father died, Collins was admitted to Winchester College as a scholar.⁴⁹ Probably he owed his election to the fact that his grandfather had been a clergyman. Among his contemporaries at the school were Joseph Warton, the future Headmaster, whose friendship survived into later years; James Hampton, the future translator of Polybius and wrecker of tea-parties; William Whitehead, the future Poet Laureate; and John Mulso, whose small fame rests uneasily upon the double circumstance of his being the friend of Gilbert White and the brother of Mrs. Chapone. From the little that we know of Mulso in later life, he must have been well qualified to appreciate his sister's 'Letters on the Improvement of the Mind.'

The study of mythology and legend in the language of Homer and Virgil must have been congenial to the youthful Collins, and the poems and rumours of poems which belong to this period prove that his powers

developed rapidly. The first of the rumours may be quickly dismissed. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1734, records in the 'Register of Books' a poem 'On The Royal Nuptials,' by "Wm. Collins."⁵⁰ Collins must have had a number of older namesakes, including some with literary ambitions, and it is most unlikely, as is generally agreed, that verses on such a subject by a boy of thirteen would have found favour with a publisher. On the other hand, we cannot doubt the story that Collins composed at the age of twelve a poem on 'The Battle of the Schoolbooks,' which included the line, "And every Gradus flapped his leathern wing."⁵¹ That line is its own guarantee of authenticity. A poem 'On Hercules,' in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1738, was claimed for Collins ninety years later, and, if the case is established, must rank as his first publication.⁵² For Collins's authorship of the misnamed Sonnet, appearing in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1739, and signed "Delicatulus," we have the word of Thomas Warton in a circumstantial statement.⁵³ On the same authority we must believe that "Mr. Collins wrote his Eclogues when he was about seventeen years old, at Winchester School," though we do not know to what extent they may have been revised and enlarged before the publication of the volume in 1742.

On March 21, 1740, Collins was admitted a Commoner of Queen's College, Oxford, and matriculated the following day.⁵⁴ "Remaining still at Winchester," according to Bloxam, "he was elected in the summer of 1740, and was placed first upon the Roll for New College; but no vacancy occurring during the year, he became superannuated."⁵⁵ Johnson believed that "this was the original misfortune of his life," and it is probably true that other misfortunes sprang from it. The words of Gilbert White, in his well-known letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, imply that Collins still hoped to find a vacancy at New College after his admission to Queen's.⁵⁶ However, that may be, on July 29, 1741, Collins was elected a Demy of Magdalen, of which College his cousin, William Payne, was a Fellow. In 1743 he took his Bachelor's degree.⁵⁷

It is certain that Collins the undergraduate did not fulfil the promise of Collins the schoolboy. Gilbert White, whose memoir does him no credit, says that "he brought with him . . . too high an opinion of his school acquisitions, and a sovereign contempt for all academic studies and discip-

line."⁵⁸ We know enough of the state of Oxford in the eighteenth century to suspect that Collins's superior airs may have been in some measure justified, and that it was not without reason that he "was always complaining of the dullness of a college life." Probably he felt that whatever Oxford could teach him he could learn better in his own way. One anecdote of his life at Magdalen is recalled by Gilbert White:

It happened one afternoon at a tea-visit, that several intelligent friends were assembled at his rooms to enjoy each other's conversation, when comes a member of a certain college,⁵⁹ as remarkable at that time for his brutal disposition as for his good scholarship; who, though he met with a circle of the most peaceable people in the world, was determined to quarrel; and, though no man said a word, lifted up his foot and kicked the tea-table, and all its contents, to the other side of the room. Our poet, tho' of a warm temper, was so confounded at the unexpected downfall, and so astonished at the unmerited insult, that he took no notice of the aggressor, but getting up from his chair calmly, he began picking up the slices of bread and butter, and the fragments of his china, repeating very slowly, "Invenias etiam disiecti membra poetae."

It will be necessary to say something more of this story in connection with Collins's activities in 1747.

Ragsdale, who must have been almost illiterate, says that Collins "stood for a fellowship, which, to his great mortification, he lost, and which was his reason for quitting that place, at least that was his pretext." Probably he did not know what a fellowship was, and may have confused it with the coveted scholarship at New College. In any case the narrator cannot have spoken from personal knowledge; nor, we may suppose, could he have proved his statement that Collins "was in arrears to his bookseller, his tailor, and other tradesmen." A more probable story is mentioned casually by an anonymous contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1823,⁶⁰ who claims to have received it by an unbroken tradition. Writing of Magdalen College he says:

We speak from impression; for many a morning between chapel and breakfast have we lounged in its cloistered walk, and turned back when we came to the naked trees; . . . we have admired the spur royals from the secret treasures of *Domus*; eaten venison with contemporaries of Collins the Poet; and learned from them that he was a poek-fretted man, with small black eyes; associated very little; and was introduced into Magdalen by Dr. Payne, an uncle,⁶¹ whom he offended by refusing to pay attention to him, and therefore left the University.

If we are to believe half that Gilbert White tells us of Collins's restlessness at Oxford, and his desire to display himself in the great world, we cannot suppose that he wished to pursue an academic career indefinitely; though it is possible that his decision to leave was precipitated by the quarrel with his cousin.

Dr. Johnson tells us that Collins "came to London, a literary adventurer with many projects in his head and very little money in his pocket." That is not surprising. The statement would be equally true of Johnson himself, and of a great number of poets of all generations since the time of Shakespeare. Ragsdale may be allowed to speak with authority so long as he confines himself to the things that he had seen and heard; and from the particulars to be gathered from his narrative it is possible to follow the essentials of the plan which Collins must have proposed to himself.

We must first remark that in December, 1743,⁶² before leaving Oxford, he had published with the firm of Cooper⁶³ his 'Verses Humbly Address'd to Sir Thomas Hanmer.' If, as is generally agreed, the poem was designed as an appeal for the great man's patronage, it did not achieve its object; but it proved to be a saleable product, as a second edition was required the following year.⁶⁴ With the second edition there was published for the first time the best and most promising poem which Collins had written so far, 'A Song from Shakespeare's Cymbeline.'

Collins, then, had solid ground for his confidence in his power to support himself by his pen, as Gilbert White in his most sceptical mood could hardly have denied. Pope, by the time he was thirty, "had laid up between six and seven thousand pounds, the fruits of his poetry," as Macaulay reminds us.⁶⁵ It is by no means certain that Collins, if he had set his mind to it, could not have ground out as many iambic jingles to the hour as Pope had ever done; but he did not expect the *mens dirinior* to contribute substantially to the business of earning his living. "To raise a present subsistence," says Ragsdale, "he set about writing his odes." The continuation, describing how Collins sometimes spent whole days at Ragsdale's house, attempting one poem after another "and as frequently burning what he had written," is too circumstantial to be doubted,⁶⁶ but we must be careful to distinguish between Ragsdale's facts, which are acceptable, and his assumptions, which are not. Sir Egerton Brydges says with true in-

sight, after quoting this passage: "That he wrote the Odes to gain a present subsistence is but the tradesman's mistaken comment." There is no evidence that Collins thought of publishing his odes, or any of them, earlier than the spring of 1746, and even then it does not appear that his principal motive was mercenary.

Fortunately, Ragsdale himself has given us more than a hint of the way in which Collins proposed "to raise a present subsistence." At some time before his migration to London a large group of publishers, of whom Mrs. Mary Cooper was one, had banded themselves together to produce a work which may now be regarded as a somewhat clumsy predecessor of the 'Dictionary of National Biography.' A royal patent dated Sept. 26, 1744, states that the publishers

have, by their Petition, humbly represented unto Us, that they have for several Years past been at great Pains, and a very large Expence, in procuring and furnishing Books, and other Materials, to Gentlemen of Learning, who have employed their utmost Attention and Diligence in compiling a very useful and extensive Work, intituled *Biographica Britannica*: Or, The Lives of the most Eminent Persons who have flourished in Great Britain and Ireland, from the earliest Ages down to the present Times.

Collins was excellently qualified to join the ranks of the "Gentlemen of Learning." Among the numerous projectors of the enterprise was Richard Manby, and we learn from Ragsdale that Collins

engaged with Mr. Manby, a bookseller on Ludgate Hill, to furnish him some Lives for the *Biographia Britannica*, which Manby was then publishing. He showed me some of the lives in embryo; but I do not recollect that any of them came to perfection.

It is possible, in spite of Ragsdale's scepticism, that the first volume⁶⁷ may contain unrecognised contributions by Collins, though there is nothing that proclaims his authorship. Ragsdale cannot have had very exact information if he supposed that Manby was the only publisher concerned.

If the 'Biographia Literaria' was of the nature of necessary drudgery, and the odes were to be reserved for occasional moments of inspiration, it is natural that Collins should have thought of a third project falling somewhere between these two extremes. We have the triple testimony of Dr. Johnson, Thomas Warton⁶⁸ and Gilbert White⁶⁹ that he published proposals for a 'History of the Revival of Learning.'⁷⁰ Johnson adds: "I have heard him speak with great kindness of Leo the Tenth, and with keen resentment of his tactless successor. But probably

4

not a page of his history was ever written." The latter assumption we now know to be unjustified. Though it is unlikely that the book reached the stage of print, as no copy has ever been discovered, it must have had, at least in part, a recognisable existence; for Mr. H. Q. White has noticed in *A Literary Journal*⁷¹ for December, 1744, at the head of a short list of books deserving to be mentioned: "A Review of the Advancement of Learning from 1300 to 1521 by Wm. Collins, 4to."⁷²

A well-known passage in one of Mulso's early letters to Gilbert White, dated July 18, 1744, reveals Collins in the full flood of this activity:

I saw Collins in Town, he is entirely an Author, & hardly speaks out of Rule: I hope his Subscriptions go on well in Oxford: he told me that poor Hargrave was quite abandon'd, that he frequented Night Cellars; I am sure you will be sorry for it, it really concerns me when I think of it, that so sprightly a Genius & so much good-nature should be thrown away.⁷³

The sprightly Hargrave is to appear again in Mulso's correspondence, and anything that can be said of his identity shall be deferred to that occasion. It is sufficient to notice at this stage that Collins's words, as Mulso reports them, do not give the impression that he shared Hargrave's taste for dissipation. His mind was fully occupied with his literary projects, and mainly, we may presume, with his 'Review of the Advancement of Learning.'

Our next information is derived from a most interesting and valuable book entitled 'A Duke and His Friends,' written by the late Duke of Richmond and Gordon when Earl of March, and consisting very largely of letters addressed to the second Duke of Richmond. It appears that one of the Duke's occasional correspondents was Colonel Edmund Martin, Collins's maternal uncle, whose privilege it often was "to enjoy the Duke's hospitality at Goodwood as well as to join the merry throng that assembled at Charlton during the hunting season." The first and most important of the Colonel's letters is dated from Fort William, Scotland, Sept. 17, 1744, and begins:

Nothing could give me greater pleasure
that ye receipt of Your most kind and most
obliging Letter. I was afraid I had the mis-
fortune of Displeasing You, and had not ye
Courage to write, tho' I attempted it two or
three times and as often burnt it. I am
extreamly sorry my Nephew had ye Impudence
to apply to You; I knew nothing of it, if I had

15

he should not have done it; I never thought an Oxford Education was fit for anything but a Parson, and they a Nuisance to ye Commonwealth.⁷⁴

With the help of this letter we are able to confirm at some points, and to correct at others, a story transmitted by Hay, which has come to be accepted as authentic because Hay was in a position to receive it by direct tradition.⁷⁵ "In 1743 or 1744," says this authority,

he quitted the college [Magdalen]; and at the desire of his mother's brother, lieutenant-colonel Martin, of Guy's⁷⁶ regiment of foot, went to Flanders, where the colonel then was; who would have provided for him in the army, but found him too indolent, even for the army; and besides, his mind was fixed on letters, and the improvement of his intellect. Returning, therefore, to England, he applied, by the colonel's desire, to Mr. Green, who gave him a title to the curacy of Birdham, of which Mr. Green was rector, and letters of recommendation to the bishop, (doctor Mawson) then in London. With these, and the necessary credentials, he went to London; but did not go to the bishop's, being dissuaded from the clerical office by Mr. Hardham the tobaccoconist.

We may say at once that Hay is mistaken in supposing that Colonel Martin was in Flanders at the time in question. We know from the letter just quoted that the Colonel was in Scotland on Sept. 17, 1744, and we have independent evidence that he remained in Scotland for some months after that date. His regiment, the 57th (afterwards re-numbered the 46th) Foot, had "received orders to proceed to North Britain" in October, 1743,⁷⁷ and there it remained until some time after May 1, 1745, when Colonel Martin was transferred to the King's Regiment of Foot.⁷⁸ It appears that even after his transfer the Colonel did not change his quarters immediately, for he writes again to the Duke of Richmond from "Fortwilliam, N. B.", on May 14, 1745. There is no reason to doubt that he had been there during the whole interval since his last letter. "It is noteworthy too," as Lord March observes, "that he dates his letter three days after Fontenoy had been fought; but the news of that disaster cannot have reached him at the time of writing, as he makes no allusion to it."⁷⁹

Returning to the autumn of 1744, and to the immediate problem, we may now proceed with some confidence to separate truth from fiction in Hay's narrative. Collins did not go to Flanders to consult Colonel Martin, and did not offer himself for the curacy of Birdham "by the colonel's desire"; he decided of his own volition to take Orders, and, with-

out his uncle's knowledge, asked the Duke of Richmond for assistance in obtaining a curacy. The Duke of Richmond had as his domestic chaplain Richard Green, who was also rector of Birdham.⁵⁰ We must suppose, then, that the Duke, perhaps mildly amused but willing to be helpful, referred the matter to his chaplain, who replied that he could make use of a curate at Birdham. The rest of the story as Hay tells it is, we need not doubt, correct in all essentials.

P. L. CARVER.

(*To be continued.*)

⁴⁹ T. F. Kirby, 'Winchester Scholars,' p. 238.

⁵⁰ The exact form of the notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* is as follows:

" 18. On the Royal Nuptials. An Irregular Ode. By Mr. Philips, price 1s.

19. A Poem on the same Occasion. By Wm. Collins. Printed for J. Roberts, pr. 6d."

It does not appear that Philips's poem has survived, as there is no mention of it in Miss Segar's 'Poems of Ambrose Philips' (1937), or, so far as can be ascertained, in any bibliography. Perhaps the two manuscripts were in the hands of the same printer, and were lost or destroyed together. Mr. I. A. Williams ('Seven Eighteenth-Century Bibliographies,' pp. 102-4) offers some sound reasons for the conjecture that "Collins" may be a misprint for "Collier."

⁵¹ *European Magazine and London Review*, Vol. xxviii, p. 377.

52 See 'The Crypt,' Vol. ii, p. 56.

53 "In a magazine [The Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. ix] I find the following memorandum, in Dr. Warton's handwriting:—P. 545. *Sappho's Advice* was written by me, then at Winchester School; the next *Beauty and Innocence* by Tomkyns; and the sonnet by Collins." Wooll, 'Biographical Memoirs of the late Revd. Joseph Warton, D.D.'

54 Bloxam, 'Register of St. Mary Magdalene College, Oxford,' Vol. vi., pp. 254-5.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

56 "About the year 1740, he came off that seminary [Winchester] first upon roll [a footnote adds that Joseph Warton was second and Mulso third], and was entered a commoner of Queen's college. There, no vacancy offering for New-college, he remained a year or two, and then was chosen demy of Magdalene-college; where, I think, he took a degree."

57 Bloxam, *op. cit.*, Vol. vi, p. 255.

58 *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. li, p. 11.

59 A footnote adds, "The translator of Polybius." He is easily identified as James Hampton, who had been at Winchester with Collins.

60 Vol. xciii, p. 334. Mr. E. G. Ainsworth, ('Poor Collins,' p. 12) considers this "a less trustworthy account" than that of Ragsdale, but gives no reason for his opinion.

61 Actually, as we know, Dr. Payne was Collins's cousin; but as he was some ten years older, and seems to have stood on his dignity as a Fellow, people who saw them together without knowing them intimately might natur-

ally have taken them for uncle and nephew. William Payne was sixty-one at the time of his death in 1772 (Ad. MS. 39326 (73), f. 590).

62 *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. xiii, p. 672.

63 Thomas Cooper is believed to have died about the time when Collins's poem was written (1743). His widow, Mrs. Mary Cooper, carried on the business until her death in 1761, but "was associated with Dodsley in many of his publications" (Plomer, 'Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers, 1726-1775.' p. 60).

64 This time Dodsley's name appeared on the title-page in conjunction with that of "M. Cooper" (see note 63 above). Bronson, by a curious misprint, transcribes: "Printed for R. Dodsley, . . . and Mr. Cooper, . . ." ('Poems of William Collins,' p. lxxx).

65 See the opening paragraphs of his essay on 'Mr. Robert Montgomery.'

66 'The Manners' is one of the odes, and perhaps the only one, which we should suppose, from internal evidence, to have been written at this time. Professor Bronson remarks that "the closing lines, in particular, are full of the exaltation which a man of Collins's temperament would feel upon plunging, with a sense of newly acquired freedom, into the varied life of a great city." The internal evidence would be almost conclusive if it were not for a difficulty which Bronson admits by implication: "Lines 67-70, with the foot-note about Le Sage's death in 1745, could easily have been inserted later, upon a report of his decease—a false report, for he did not die till November, 1747, and in Boulogne, not in Paris."

67 Vol. i. of the complete work is dated 1747; but the issue of weekly parts had begun in March, 1745 (*London Magazine and Monthly Chronologer* for 1745, p. 180).

68 'History of English Poetry,' Section xxxiii.

69 Ragsdale is not included among the authorities because he evidently took the title of the book from Johnson. His story that Collins began the work in consequence of the stoppage of an allowance from Colonel Martin may be dismissed as fiction.

70 Gilbert White gives the title, absurdly, as 'A History of the Darker Ages.'

71 Vol. i, p. 226. See Mr. White's article in the *Review of English Studies* for 1927 (Vol. iii, p. 16).

72 It is difficult to understand how Mr. E. G. Ainsworth, who cites this evidence ('Poor Collins,' p. 15), can think it consistent on the previous page to speak of Collins as having "tired his wit on a thousand schemes and never fulfilled his vague resolves," adding, "The projected *Review of the Advancement of Learning from 1300 to 1521* is a case in point." If the other nine hundred and ninety-nine schemes made as much progress as the one mentioned as "a case in point" it is not unreasonable to expect that Mr. Ainsworth should have collected some particulars about them. On p. 18 the 'Review of the Advancement of Learning' is mentioned again, as one of two "cases in point"; but this time the statement to be illustrated is that "Collins habitually clung to his projects."

73 'Mulso's Letters to Gilbert White,' p. 3.

74 'A Duke and His Friends,' pp. 456-7. That the nephew in question is any person other than Collins is a possibility hardly worth considering. The family is easily traced, and it does not appear that Colonel Martin had any other nephew except Abraham Martin, the son of his brother Henry. Abraham Martin, to whom his uncle left some small property, may be assumed to have grown up into a Sussex yeoman like his forbears; in any case it is certain that he was never at Oxford.

75 "Other accounts," says Moy Thomas, "place the date of Collins's visit to Flanders later. I follow Hay, who was a fellow townsman of Collins, and who was evidently well informed. He was no doubt acquainted with Collins's sister, Mrs. Durnford." ('Poetical Works of William Collins,' p. xvii.). We shall find that Collins did, in fact, visit Flanders twice, but both occasions were later than 1744.

76 This is an error. Colonel Martin's regiment was the 57th Foot, commanded by Colonel Thomas Murray.

77 R. Cannon, 'Historical Record of the Forty-Sixth, or the South Devonshire Regiment of Foot: originally numbered the Fifty-Seventh Regiment,' p. 3. See also the manuscript Marching Orders in the Public Record Office (W. O. 536, *passim*).

A fact which has misled some of Collins's biographers is that Colonel John Price, who commanded the 57th Foot when Colonel Martin joined it, was transferred on June 23, 1743, to the 14th Foot, and was succeeded by Thomas Murray (Dalton, 'George the First's Army,' Vol. ii, p. 268; State Papers 41/14). Colonel Martin is commonly said to have been serving with "Price's Regiment" at the time of his nephew's supposed visit to Flanders in 1744; but he never belonged to the 14th Foot, which was the regiment known as "Price's" at that period. Actually, as we gather from the letter to the Duke of Richmond, quoted in the text, he was not serving with any regiment during his sojourn at Fort William, but was in command of a detachment of four Companies.

78 For particulars of Colonel Martin's military career see Dalton's 'George the First's Army,' Vol. ii, p. 165; 'Historical Record of the King's Liverpool Regiment of Foot' (1905), p. 42; 'N. & Q.' 12 S. i. 245; and State Papers 44 in the Public Record Office.

79 'A Duke and His Friends,' p. 460.

80 Ad. MS. 39326 (40), f. 1389.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* pp. 128, 146.)

JOHN HARDHAM, by whose intervention Collins was "dissuaded from the clerical office," was a native of Chichester, and has a place of his own in the 'Dictionary of National Biography.' He was an enthusiastic lover of the drama, and had rendered some small services to Garrick. Garrick, in return, had sung the praises of a certain brand of snuff which Hardham prepared from a secret formula, and which came to be known as "No. 37" from the number of the jar in which was stored. The business is still carried on in premises in the Strand, close by those of the original Hardham, and still has possession of the secret formula, so that people who care to buy a few ounces of the eighteenth century may see them weighed out from the identical Jar 37 which has supplied Garrick, Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a host of their friends, probably including Collins.

A name is all—from Garrick's breath a puff
Of praise gave immortality to snuff:
Since when each connoisseur a transient
heaven
Finds in each pinch of Hardham's Thirty-
seven.⁸¹

By the time of his death in 1772 Hardham had amassed a considerable fortune, which he left for the benefit of his fellow-townsmen, and the inhabitants of Chichester still have a lively sense of gratitude for the "Hardham Trust." We cannot believe that either the smile of Garrick or the possession of a secret formula could have transformed a nonentity into a man of power in two widely different spheres. Hardham must have had to a rare degree the gift of personality, radiating influence and communicating inspiration with no conscious effort. The fact that Collins came from Chichester must have aroused his interest from the first, and we may be sure that the sense of theatrical swiftness which Hay conveys by half a sentence—"being dissuaded from the clerical office by Mr. Hardham, the tobacconist"—corresponds to the reality of the scene.

If it is true that Collins reveals himself in his poems⁸² we cannot believe that he had ever had any vocation for Holy Orders, and his decision to apply for a curacy must be taken as evidence that literature, as a means of making ends meet, had failed. So much

Hardham would very easily discover, and we know what his answer must have been. We can almost hear him arguing, with much force and many examples, that no man could live by poetry and biography alone, however it might have been in the past; that the future was with the drama, and that Collins, having read Aristotle and the Greeks, and knowing how a tragedy ought to be constructed, as well as having a natural gift, was just the man to conquer this limitless field.

There is reason to believe that Collins made a serious attempt to write a tragedy.⁸³ According to Dr. Johnson he planned several, and the fact that none of them came to completion does not prove that he was indolent, for Collins was always his own severest critic. It is not surprising to learn from Ragsdale that he spent much time in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, in the company of actors and dramatists.

He was an acceptable companion everywhere; and, among the gentlemen who loved him for a genius, I may reckon the Doctors Armstrong, Barrowby, and Hill, Messrs. Quin, Garrick, and Foote, who frequently took his opinion on their pieces before they were seen by the public. He was particularly noticed by the geniuses who frequented the Bedford and Slaughter's Coffee Houses. From his knowledge of Garrick he had the liberty of the scenes and green-room, where he made diverting observations on the vanity and false consequence of that class of people; and his manner of relating them to his particular friends was extremely entertaining.

"In London I met him often," says Gilbert White, "and remember he lodged in a little house with a Miss Bundy,⁸⁴ at the corner of King's square-court, Soho, now a warehouse, for a long time together." Mulso is known to have been living in King's Square Court at this time, and on Oct. 8, 1744, he makes the second of his well-known allusions to Collins. After speaking of Joseph Warton, who had recently left London, he continues:

Collins is now my next neighbour. I break-fasted with him this morning, & Capn. Hargrave play'd on ye Harpsichord, which He has not forgott quite so much as He has Himself.⁸⁵

Presumably Captain Hargrave is identical with the Hargrave who had been frequenting night-cellars in the previous July; though he must have modified the habit in the interval if he could take breakfast at a conventional hour and play on the harpsichord afterwards. If he was a Captain in the Army—and we can hardly suppose that he was a sea-captain—it ought to be possible to trace him through the Army Lists. It does not appear that any person of this name, in

51

1744, held the genuine rank of captain; but it must be remembered, in the first place, that Mulso, as a clergyman, was not likely to be accurately informed upon a matter of so little concern to himself, and, secondly, that there appears a certain tendency for a young officer to anticipate the slow procedure of the War Office by assuming the higher rank on social occasions some time before his promotion is officially recognised.

If that may be admitted, the most likely candidate for the distinction is a certain Thomas Hargrave, whose father, Dr. James Hargrave, had been Dean of Chichester till his death in 1741.⁸⁶ Thomas Hargrave had matriculated at Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1742, at the age of sixteen.⁸⁷ Collins, Mulso, and Gilbert White were all at Oxford at this time, and the son of Alderman Collins might well have taken a friendly interest in the son of Dean Hargrave, in spite of the difference of seniority. Early in 1744, as we gather from his own statements, Hargrave had obtained a commission in the Army,⁸⁸ and, as Collins is believed to have left Oxford about the same time, it is possible that they went up to London together. Dean Hargrave had been in high favour with the magnificent Duke of Newcastle since the days when they were together at Cambridge.⁸⁹ The son entertained great expectations from the Duke's patronage, and he did not hope in vain; for it was evidently the Duke who sent him to Oxford and established him in the Army, even providing his uniform and personal necessaries. Then, or soon afterwards, there began a long series of errors or indiscretions. The opening paragraph of a letter dated July 28, 1745, is typical of the numerous appeals that are to follow.

After the many hardships & inconveniences which through your Grace's displeasure I have justly suffered, I hope my sincere repentance and change of Behaviour will so far intercede for me as to give me leave to lay before you, how willing I am to undergo whatever your Grace shall please to lay upon me, and how entirely I am incapable of making Provision for my Voyage to Minorca.⁹⁰

In the continuation he says that he has "been upon duty with the imprest men at the Tower ever since I was in the Regiment." That is useful information, as it shows that he must have been in London at the time when Mulso was writing to Gilbert White. So far as we can judge by his letters, he was not at heart a scoundrel; but he was weak, unstable and shamelessly parasitic. One thing may be said in his favour: his writing is beautifully neat and clear, with signs of

artistic taste. If it was the author of this exquisite penmanship who played on the harpsichord in Collins's rooms, we may be sure that he touched the instrument with a natural grace such as to compel the admiration of his critics.

Dr. Johnson would have us believe that Collins was morally no better than Hargrave, for he hints at the worst vices when he says that "his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure, or casual temptation." It is impossible to make out any real consistency between the damaging intention of this veiled indictment and the earlier admission that "his morals were pure, and his opinions pious." We must remember that Dr. Johnson wrote his account late in life, from a hazy recollection of a very brief acquaintance. His facts are subordinate to his generalisations, and have a suspicious appearance of having grown out of them.

It is not surprising that Collins's attempts at dramatic composition expired long before the Fifth Act. His was not the world of reality, in which human characters act from motives intelligible to an audience; and the mere labour of writing a tragedy, though it may be easy to a practised hand, must have seemed a mountainous undertaking to a poet accustomed to polish his phrases and weigh his syllables.⁹¹ Collins fell back upon the theory of the drama, where he was on more familiar ground, and turned his thoughts to a translation of Aristotle's 'Poetics.' About this time, says Dr. Johnson, with no indication of a date, "I fell into his company." There follows the well-known story which has reminded more than one biographer of the similar assistance rendered to Goldsmith, which led to the appearance of the 'Vicar of Wakefield':

By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the street. On this occasion recourse was had to the booksellers, who, on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to escape into the country. He showed me the guineas safe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thousand pounds; a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust.

The story of the bailiff and the negotiation with the booksellers must be believed, as the affair was one in which the narrator was personally concerned. The last sentence, however, presents a difficulty. We have sup-

posed that the nomination for the curacy of Birdham, in September, 1744, was followed immediately by the talk with Hardham, leading, at no long interval, to the planning of tragedies and the frequent visits to Drury Lane; and that this new interest gradually exhausted itself and was succeeded by the project of translating Aristotle. We should suppose the whole of this phase to account for a few weeks, or a very few months, extending to or a little beyond the end of 1744. It can be proved, however, that Colonel Martin's death, which Dr. Johnson mentions, did not occur till the spring of 1749: an interval far too long, and too eventful in Collins's life, to be bridged by the expression "soon afterwards." Ragsdale's account agrees perfectly with Johnson's, but cannot be said to corroborate it; for it must be remembered that Ragsdale wrote with the printed page of Johnson's narrative before him, and probably resorted to it for information where his own knowledge failed. After speaking of Collins's entertaining talk in the green-room of Drury Lane, in the passage already quoted, he continues: "In this manner he lived, with and upon his friends, until the death of Colonel Martin, who left what fortune he died possessed of unto him and his two sisters."

The most probable explanation is that Colonel Martin has been confused with Collins's other uncle, and that it was the death of Charles Collins, at the beginning of 1745, which relieved the financial strain. None of the several candid friends who have published their reminiscences of Collins mentions this relative. Perhaps they were intentionally kept in ignorance, for reasons now beyond conjecture; or perhaps, as is more probable, they misunderstood some casual allusions in conversation to "my late uncle," or "my uncle's legacy," and wrongly concluded that it was Colonel Martin who had died. Thomas Warton has complicated the matter still further by confusing Colonel Martin with a public character of the time, Colonel Martin Bladen. It is customary to dismiss with an impatient gesture the statement that "Colonel Martin Bladen . . . was uncle to my dear and lamented friend, Mr. William Collins the Poet, to whom he left an estate";⁹² for it is very easy to prove that, as Moy Thomas says, "the name of Collins's uncle was simply Martin, and not Martin Bladen, with whom he had no connection whatever." It is possible, however, to detect a substratum of truth beneath Warton's superficial error. To the biographer of

Collins the exact name of the deceased relative, though important, is less important than the date when Collins came into his inheritance. Colonel Martin Bladen died Feb. 15, 1746.⁹³ Charles Collins must have died about a year earlier, if we may judge by the fact that his will was proved on March 5, 1745; but we shall find that the main provisions of the will did not take effect until a year after the testator's death, so that the date of the death of Martin Bladen must be approximately, as Warton supposed, the date when Collins came into the estate.

A few facts about the career of Charles Collins can be gathered from official sources. He was born, as we have seen, on Feb. 8, 1665/6. It is highly probable that he was educated at Winchester; for a boy named Collen or Collin⁹⁴ was a chorister at the school in 1680,⁹⁵ and among the possessions which Charles Collins bequeathed to his nephew were a drawing of Winchester College and a valued collection of Church music. On March 26, 1686, he matriculated at New College, Oxford, as *puer pauper serviens*,⁹⁶ but there is no record of his having graduated. In later years, as appears from his will, he was associated with Lord Weymouth in some way which created expectations of a legacy, but nothing is known of this phase of his career. On April 14, 1696, at the church of St. Peter the Great, Chichester, he married Elizabeth Cardiffe,⁹⁷ who must have died at some time before 1729. On March 24, 1729, he was admitted a Brother of the Charterhouse, on the nomination of the Duke of Newcastle,⁹⁸ and there he spent the rest of his life. How he came to have influence with the Duke of Newcastle is one of many interesting questions which must be left unanswered: possibly Dr. Hargrave, afterwards Dean of Chichester, whose son is believed to have been Collins's friend, was the intermediary. His name appears in the manuscript list of the electors of Sussex compiled by the agents of the Duke of Newcastle, for no very reputable purpose, in 1734;⁹⁹ here he is shown as being resident in London but having a vote in respect of freehold property in the parish of St. Bartholomew, Chichester.

By his will Charles Collins appointed his "dearly beloved Nephews William Collins and Dr. George Payne" his executors, and made the former his principal heir. "Item," he directed,

for my freehold estate seintuate lying and being in the parish of Saint Bartholomews without the West gate of the City of Chichester Sussex I give and bequeath to my Nephew

William Collins Son of Alderman William Collins of the City and County aforesaid all my said freehold Estate with all Appurtenances belonging to it with all Rents Arrearages and Profits from it arising from one Year after my Decease to be accounted for to him.

Collins is also to have the most precious of his personal possessions.

Item I give to my Nephew William Collins my Fathers Picture in a frane and my own picture without a Frame and Alexander taking Darius in his Court without a Frame and the Draught of Winchester Colledge in a black Frame. Also I give to my aforesaid Nephew William Collins my Silver Tankard with my Arms on it and my collection of Musick on the Score [;] this collection of Church Music as well as Songs and other Musick¹⁰⁰ which if you have no relish of it now, it may be hereafter valuable therefore pray make much of it and keep it for the Love the Family have born to that Family.¹⁰¹

Most readers will forgive the disregard of grammatical consistency for the sake of sentiments like this.

George Payne inherits two separate sums of forty pounds and thirty guineas, besides pictures of "King Charles the first and his Queen in one Frame gilt and King Charles the second and Queen Anne both in Lacker or Gilt frams [sic]." The testator's niece, Elizabeth Collins, is left "the sum of one Shilling of good and lawfull Money of Great Britain," together with her grandmother's wedding ring, and her sister Anne one shilling only; with the prospect of sharing between them "the Lord Viscount Waymouth and his Sister's Money if there be any likelihood of it." We know that whatever likelihood there may have been was not realised; for the will of Lord Weymouth, who died in 1749, contains no mention of any member of the Collins family.

The statement is attributed to Dr. Durnford, the second husband of Anne Collins, "that the sister of Collins loved money to excess, and evinced so outrageous an aversion to her brother, because he squandered or gave away to the boys in the cloisters whatever money he had, that she destroyed, in a paroxysm of resentment, all his papers, and whatever remained of his enthusiasm for poetry, as far as she could."¹⁰² In justice to Anne Durnford we must remember that her side of the case has not been heard, and that there is no evidence for the story except the unsavoury evidence of a man who proclaims himself capable of besmirching his wife's memory after her death. The probability is that Durnford knew nothing more than that his wife had destroyed papers of some kind which her brother had valued; and it is very

likely, if that is so, that it was the collection of Church music and songs which came to this untimely end. However that may be, one cannot read the will of Charles Collins without wondering whether, by good fortune, some of the pictures may have survived, and whether in some neglected corner there may still be found a silver tankard engraved with the Collins arms: Vert, a griffin segreant or.

P. L. CARVER.

(To be continued.)

⁸¹ Colton, 'Hypocrisy,' quoted by the 'D.N.B.' under 'Hardham.'

⁸² As Mr. Ainsworth insists ('Poor Collins,' p. viii., following M. Emile Montégut).

⁸³ Langhorne says, with heavy and laborious irony, that Collins "proceeded so far towards a tragedy—as to become acquainted with the manager."

⁸⁴ See Mr. H. O. White's article, 'William Collins and Miss Bundy,' in the *Review of English Studies* for 1930, p. 437.

⁸⁵ 'Mulso's Letters to Gilbert White,' p. 7.

⁸⁶ He had formerly, according to Nichols, been rector of East Hoadley, Sussex, rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and chaplain-in-ordinary to the King. ('Literary Anecdotes,' Vol. i, p. 416).

⁸⁷ Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, p. 607.

⁸⁸ On March 2, 1750, he tells Mrs. Spence that he has held a commission "now above six years, 3 and a half of which I have been a Lieutenant." On Oct. 23, 1755, he reminds the Duke of Newcastle that he has been "eleven years an Officer." (Ad. MSS. 32724, f. 159, and 32860, f. 146).

⁸⁹ Nichols, 'Literary Anecdotes,' Vol. i, p. 416. See also the Dean's numerous letters in the Newcastle Correspondence (Ad. MSS. 32698-33087).

⁹⁰ Ad. MS. 32704, f. 535.

⁹¹ Thomas Warton says of Collins, in the course of his letter to Hymers: "I have seen all his odes already published in his own handwriting; they had the marks of repeated correction: he was perpetually changing his epithets."

⁹² Warton's note on 'The Dunciad,' iv, 560. (Pope's 'Works,' 1797, Vol. v, p. 284).

⁹³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. xvi, p. 107. The fact that Bladen is described as "of Albury Hatch, Essex," may be a further excuse for the error, if Warton knew that Collins's family originally came from Essex.

⁹⁴ Either is a possible variant of the name of the Essex family of Collins.

⁹⁵ 'Winchester Long Rolls,' ed. C. W. Holgate, pp. 36 and 40.

⁹⁶ Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses* (Early Series), Vol. i, p. 308. His name is given alternatively as "Colling," but his identity is clear from his father's name, Roger, and his being "of Chichester."

⁹⁷ Ad. MS. 5699, f. 184.

⁹⁸ Private information kindly supplied from the records of the Charterhouse by Captain E.

R. Wilson. It may be added that although, generally speaking, the inmates of the Charter-house were gentlemen by birth who had fallen into poverty, the latter condition was subject to many exceptions. Smythe ('Historical Account of Charter-House,' pp. 256-260) gives an impressive list of doctors, scientists and scholars who chose to live there for the sake of peace and freedom for study, concluding, "And very recently, Sir *Henry Mackworth*, Bart. here terminated an existence the latter part of which was spent in great comfort in this peaceful spot."

99 Ad. MS. 33059 B.

100 The words italicised are inserted in the margin.

101 In this portion of the will the testator seems to have set down his thoughts as they occurred to him, with conversational freedom. The will was begun, apparently with the help of a lawyer, on Sept. 2, 1740, and was finished, again, apparently, with legal help, on June 19, 1742. The part written in the interval seems to have been done by the old man himself, without assistance.

The probable reason for the postponement is that the lawyer, after writing out the opening sentences, enquired who were to be the executors, and then ascertained by a question that the nephew William Collins, whose name was proosed, was not yet twenty-one; the testator then put off the completion of the document rather than substitute any other name.

102 Quoted by Moy Thomas, 'Poetical Works of William Collins,' p. lxiii.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* pp. 128, 146, 167.)

MOY Thomas, in an effort to give order and coherence to the chaotic mass of details available, has increased the confusion by inventing new facts out of his imagination. Collins's mother had died at the beginning of July, 1744, and had directed in her will that the whole of her possessions, consisting principally of copyhold land within the Manor of Cackham, should be sold, and the proceeds divided equally between Elizabeth, Anne and William Collins. The mention of Cackham must have reminded Moy Thomas that Southcott Farm, the home of the Martin family, was in this neighbourhood. Accordingly he hastens to add that the land in question was "secured by his mother's marriage settlement to her children." He then tells the story of Collins's supposed visit to Colonel Martin in Flanders, the offer of the curacy of Birdham, and the meeting with Hardham, and continues :

From that time Collins appears to have adopted the precarious profession of a man of letters. He disposed of the property inherited from his mother to his relative Mr. George Payne, and probably subsisted on the proceeds. He became a frequenter of the leading coffee-houses, and contracted an acquaintance with actors and the theatre. He soon dissipated his small fortune, and fell into pecuniary embarrassments. About this time he made the acquaintance of Johnson.¹⁰³

This account has come to be accepted as authoritative, and is followed by such modern biographers as Professor Bronson and Mr Ainsworth. Let us look at the facts of the case, so far as we can ascertain them. The original Edmund Martin, the father of Colonel Martin and of Mrs. Collins, seems to have died intestate; but it is certain that the ownership of Southcott Farm descended in the ordinary course to his elder son, Henry. Henry Martin died in 1715, leaving "all my Copyhold lands and tenements whatsoever lying and being in the Manor of Cackham" to his brother Edmund. Edmund Martin, whom we know as Collins's uncle, sold the

¹⁰³ 'Poetical Works of William Collins,' pp. xvii-xviii.

property on 17 Jan., 1717, to one John Croucher,¹⁰⁴ and with that transaction it passed for ever away from the Martin family. It is, therefore, impossible that this estate should ever have descended to Mrs. Collins, or been secured to her children by her marriage settlement. It is true that Mrs. Collins, at her death, owned land in the same neighbourhood, and bequeathed it, as we have seen, to her children; but that land had been left to her by her husband, as a comparison of the two wills will show. Presumably Alderman Collins had acquired it by purchase, as he certainly had not inherited it from his father.

The statement that Collins disposed of this property to George Payne, lived for a time on the proceeds, and "soon dissipated his small fortune," is, to say the least, misleading. The will of Mrs. Collins, for some reason which cannot now be explained, was not proved until 12 Aug., 1745, more than a year after the testator's death, and the sale to George Payne did not take place till late in 1749, after the death of Colonel Martin. Of that transaction something more shall be said in its place.

Ragsdale, though nearer to the sources of information, is hardly more convincing than Moy Thomas, for it is evident that he pretended to a greater knowledge of Collins's private affairs than he actually possessed. Speaking of Collins's first arrival in London from Oxford, he says:

Colonel Martin was at that time with his regiment: and Mr. Payne, a near relation, who had the management of the Colonel's affairs, had likewise a commission to supply the Collinsees with small sums of money.

We need not review the evidence again. We have already found satisfactory proof that Colonel Martin was not related to George Payne,¹⁰⁵ unless the fact that his sister had married Payne's maternal uncle can be said to constitute a relationship. To impart any semblance of probability to the story so far we must, as before, substitute the name of Charles Collins for that of Colonel Martin; though even with that emendation the statement that Payne had a commission to supply

¹⁰⁴ Private information kindly supplied by Mr. John W. Goodger, the present owner of the property, through his solicitors, Messrs. Pink, Marston & Birch, of Portsmouth.

¹⁰⁵ It could be added that the Colonel was not with his regiment at this time, but commanding a detachment at Fort William. The point is of no importance except as a further reminder that Ragsdale's account of any matter in which he was not personally concerned should always be taken with reserve.

the Collins family with small sums of money is open to grave doubt. The narrative continues :

The colonel was the more sparing in this order, having suffered considerably by Alderman Collins, who had formerly been his agent, and forgetting that his wife's brother's cash was not his own, had applied it to his own use.

All that can be said of that libellous allegation is that it is not borne out by the only documentary evidence available after two hundred years. The will of Alderman Collins has every appearance of being that of an honest man in affluent circumstances. He appoints his wife the sole executrix and leaves her the whole of his property, but directs that she shall sell "so much thereof as shall be necessary to pay off and discharge my Debts." The debts cannot have amounted to much; for it is apparent from the will of Mrs. Collins that she was able, when her turn came, to dispose of the whole estate which her husband had left her. Another reason for doubting the story is that Colonel Martin appears to have been a man of very small means, as we shall find at a later stage.

We need not quarrel with the statement that Collins

called on his cousin Payne, gaily dressed, and with a feather in his hat; at which his relation expressed surprise, and told him his appearance was by no means that of a young man who had not a single guinea he could call his own. That is probable, though of infinitesimal importance. In the continuation we are told that Collins expressed contempt for Payne behind his back, but was obliged to be polite to him because of his dependance on the allowance; until, finally,

his frequent demands for a supply obliged Mr. Payne to tell him he must pursue some other line of life, for he was sure Colonel Martin would be displeased with him for having done so much. This ressource being stopped, forced him to set about some work, of which his *History of the Revival of Learning* was the first.

From the facts as we understand them it is easy to suggest a more natural and less discreditable explanation of the visits to George Payne, and the "frequent demands for a supply." The two nephews, as we have seen, were joint executors of the will of Charles Collins. Though the name of William Collins comes first in the document it appears that Payne, perhaps by right of his settled position and far greater age, took the lead in completing the formalities. To him alone "Administration was granted of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of

the said Deceased," though with "Power reserved of making the like Grant to William Collins the other Executor named in the said Will when he shall apply for the same." Collins, if he wished to know how matters were progressing, would find it easier to go round to his cousin's house in Bruton Street than to deal with the lawyers, and it may have been on the occasion of his doing so that he gave offence by wearing gay clothes and a feather in his hat. It must at first have been tantalising to discover that, although he was to be the owner of freehold property in Chichester, "with all Rents Arrearages and Profits from it arising," he was not entitled to receive a penny until a full year from the date of his uncle's death. If he was in serious difficulties, as we are led to believe, he may have been driven to ask for an advance from the estate, or even for a personal loan. Payne, in all the circumstances, could hardly refuse outright; but the request would increase his sense of authority, and Collins would receive a small loan and a disproportionately stern lecture on the evil of extravagance. The scene, one imagines, was re-enacted two or three times at short intervals, and on the last occasion Collins was told in tones of finality that he must expect no more advances, and must wait for the rest until he should be entitled to receive it at the hands of the lawyers.

Whatever may be said of Collins's genius, considered in isolation from his character, there can be no doubt that his reputation has suffered from the belief that he made outrageous demands upon the income of Colonel Martin; and that after his father had criminally embezzled money entrusted to him by the same kindly and unsuspecting relative. It is even nauseating to think of such a person composing his tribute to

the brave, who sink to rest

By all their country's wishes blest

after shamelessly victimising one of the living brave who might at any time be numbered among the fallen. Though much of the truth still remains obscure, our investigation has demonstrated, we may hope, at least that contemporary gossip is not infallible.

According to Ragsdale it was after George Payne had delivered his ultimatum that Collins began his 'Review of the Advancement of Learning.' We must, however, continue to believe that Pope Leo X had exhausted his usefulness some months earlier, and that it was Aristotle who was called into requisition at this juncture. We have

already noticed evidence that the 'Review of the Advancement of Learning' was not only begun, but within measurable distance of completion, before the end of 1744; whereas, unless our reconstruction is fundamentally unsound, the first of the series of interviews with George Payne cannot have taken place until after the death of Charles Collins, about the beginning of 1745.

We reach the conclusion that it was some time during the spring or early summer of 1745 that Collins was pursued by bailiffs, met Dr. Johnson, and ultimately escaped into the country with several guineas obtained "on the credit of a translation of Aristotle's Poeticks." There is strong reason to believe that his flight into the country took him to the neighbourhood of Ragsdale's house at Richmond. It is certain that he was for some time in close association with Ragsdale, who describes the sequel from personal knowledge, and in terms which carry entire conviction.

Both Dr. Johnson and Mr. Langborne are mistaken when they say, the "Translation of Aristotle" was never begun. I know the contrary, for some progress was made in both, but most in the latter. From the freedom subsisting between us, we took the liberty of saying anything to each other. I one day reproached him with idleness; when, to convince me my censure was unjust he showed me many sheets of his "Translation of Aristotle," which he said he had so fully employed himself about, as to prevent him calling on many of his friends so frequently as he used to do.

The narrator then lapses into vagueness with the statement that "soon after this" Collins arranged with Manby to contribute to the 'Biographia Britannica.' That cannot be disproved, but it is more likely that any work of the kind which Collins did at this period was in fulfilment of an arrangement made in the previous year. We have already noticed Ragsdale's next recollection—"To raise a present subsistence he set about writing his odes"—and have decided, on grounds of probability, that Collins had composed one, at least, of the odes at the time when he left Oxford, and that the inspiring motive was not merely mercenary. We have, however, accepted Ragsdale's testimony that certain poems, complete or incomplete, were written at his house and in his presence. That statement clearly relates itself to an observation made by Professor Bronson and other critics that the companion odes 'To Pity' and 'To Fear' might have been, and probably were, an offshoot from the intensive study of Aristotle. Professor Bronson add-

that, in his opinion, "the conclusion of each ode indicates that Collins was intending to write a tragedy."¹⁰⁶ We have supposed that Collins took the line of least resistance when he turned from the practice to the theory of the drama; but it is natural that a poet of his aspirations should have entertained thoughts of a work on the grand scale even without Hardham's encouragement, and Collins, though he had postponed the writing of his tragedy, would probably not have admitted that he had abandoned the project for ever.

Ragsdale, who placed Collins under obligations—or thought he did—by giving him "a general invitation to my house, so that he frequently passed whole days there," has spoilt the effect of his generosity by speaking of the poet a little later as living "with and upon his friends." Probably Collins took the invitation somewhat too literally, and, believing that Ragsdale valued his friendship, failed to realise that he was regarded as an object of charity. How he subsisted during the next few months is not known, but it is unlikely that he was in serious difficulties, as any lawyer or banker would have accepted his uncle's will or his mother's as satisfactory security for a loan. When next we hear of him there is no sign that his movements were hampered by the lack of money. On Sept. 7, 1745, Mulso writes to Gilbert White:

Collins has been some Time return'd from Flanders, in order to put on Ye Gown as I hear, & get a chaplancy in a Regiment. Don't laugh, indeed I don't on these occasions: This will be ye second acquaintance of mine who becomes ye Thing He most derides.¹⁰⁷

It is universally assumed, and with good reason, that Collins's object in visiting Flanders was to see his military uncle, Colonel Martin, then commanding the Eighth Regiment of Foot.¹⁰⁸ If there is any truth in Hay's story that Colonel Martin pronounced him too indolent for the army, and better fitted for the Church, we may be morally sure that it was on this occasion that the words were spoken. How, then, did it happen that so unmartial a character, after settling down for a year or more to the congenial life of a

¹⁰⁶ 'Poems of William Collins,' p. 97.

¹⁰⁷ 'Letters to Gilbert White,' p. 9. Quoted by Birkbeck Hill in his notes to Johnson's 'Life' of Collins.

¹⁰⁸ See *ante* pp. 149-50 above. Exactly when Colonel Martin went abroad after his sojourn in Scotland is not known, but presumably it was not much later than May 14, 1745, on which date he was still settled at Fort William.

34

man of letters, had suddenly closed his books and taken a great amount of trouble to offer himself as a soldier? Collins's biographers do him far less than justice when they assume that he chose this inopportune moment to worry Colonel Martin about his need of money or the problem of his future career. The obvious explanation is that "some time" before the date of Mulso's letter—actually on July 25, 1745—the Young Pretender had landed in Scotland. The country was in extreme danger: in far greater danger than is commonly realised by people who allow their view of the rebellion to be obscured by Culloden. Military historians have found much to admire in the Prince's strategy, and in the tactics to which he owed his victories at Prestonpans and Falkirk. It has even been thought that he would have had an excellent chance of reaching London if he had taken the tide in his affairs at the flood instead of spending time in raising the Highlands. He could then have invited the French, who had an army ready to sail, to come over and help him to consolidate his victory, and the war would have been continued on English soil if it could have been continued at all.

Though it might have been expected that the Eighth Regiment would be ordered home when the news of the rebellion became known, there was much to be said for Collins's decision to run over to Flanders at once rather than wait for his uncle's return. Colonel Martin would probably land in Scotland; but it appeared that Scotland was to be the scene of a civil war, and it is notoriously difficult for an irresponsible civilian to arrange an interview with a soldier on active service. There was no serious fighting in Flanders: partly because both sides were exhausted after Fontenoy, and partly because it was realised that the success or failure of the Pretender must decide the next move. In these circumstances Collins's best and simplest plan would be to leave London by one of the boats sailing regularly down the Thames to Holland, and wait for Colonel Martin at his port of embarkation, whatever that might be.

It is probable that Mulso is reporting the uncle's advice rather than the nephew's intention when he says that Collins had returned to "get a chaplaincy in a Regiment." We gather that Colonel Martin did not approve of him as a volunteer, even for the duration of the rebellion; but, remembering that the young man had once caused him some embarrassment by troubling the Duke of Richmond about an application for a curacy, he may well have suggested that it might be better to be incompetent in two professions than in one.

P. L. CARVER.

(To be continued.)

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* pp. 128, 146, 167, 182.)

A BOUT the beginning of 1746 Collins would be able to gather the first harvest of rents, arrearages and profits, but it is easy to believe that the debt to George Payne, and other liabilities incurred since his uncle's death, would make alarming inroads upon the earlier instalments. When next we hear of him on May 28, 1746, he is very far from the pitiable state so vividly described by Dr. Johnson as the effect of real poverty; he is happily and proudly impecunious, much in the manner of Charles Surface. We gather that he is still lodging with Miss Bundy at King's Square Court, so that Mulso is still able to watch his movements with neighbourly malice and report them with neighbourly precision.

I can't help telling You, tho' 'tis a little uncharitable, that Collins appears in good cloaths & a wretched carcass, at all ye gay Places, tho' it was with ye utmost Difficulty that He scrap'd together 5 pound for Miss Bundy at whose Suit He was arrested & whom by his own confession He never intended to pay. I don't believe He will tell ye Story in Verse, tho' some circumstances of his taking would be burlesque enough. The Bailliff introduce'd himself with 4 Gentlemen who came to drink Tea, & who all together could raise but one Guinea. The *ἀναγνώρισις* (a word He is fond of) was quite striking & ye catastrophe quite poetical & interesting.¹⁰⁹

The very rare word *ἀναγνώρισις* is clearly, as Mr. H. O. White has suggested,¹¹⁰ a recollection of Aristotle's 'Poetics,' where it is defined as "a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune."¹¹¹ Presumably the *ἀναγνώρισις* on this occasion came with the recognition of the bailiff for the person he was.

It is not necessary to examine Mulso's gossip any further except to make a brief comment on the statement that Collins, by his own confession, had never intended to pay Miss Bundy. Mulso, in all probability, had heard of the confession not from Collins himself but from Miss Bundy, for there is reason to believe that the Mulso and Bundy families had been on friendly terms for a number of years.¹¹² Some kind of misunderstanding there must have been, for no person in Collins's position, even with every wish to be dishonest, could have imagined that he could



evade an indisputable debt to his landlady by simply refusing to pay it. The probability is that Miss Bundy was one of a number of persons who had allowed Collins credit on the strength of his uncle's will; but it is easy to believe that Collins, unintentionally, exaggerated his prospect of wealth, and, when at last his eyes were dazzled by the sight of gold, thought first of entertaining his friends instead of paying his debts. Miss Bundy, having heard sounds of revelry with disapproval, would disapprove still more when she was offered only a fraction of the sum due to her, and asked to wait for the rest till the next financial harvest. Partly, perhaps, to teach the young man a lesson—for we understand that she was the daughter of a deceased clergyman whose sermons had been published¹¹³—she went through the form of having her lodger arrested. If it was by her stage-management that the bailiff arrived at the same moment as the four guests who had come to drink tea, she must have had a fine sense of dramatic effect. Whatever her intention may have been, it can be said with certainty that the proceedings were not carried to the last extreme, as Collins's name does not appear in the Prison Books of the period.

Much sentimentality has been wasted in sympathy with the youthful genius “doubtful of a dinner or trembling at a creditor” through four or five dismal years. “Day succeeded day,” says the imaginative Langhorne, “for the support of which he had made no provision, and in which he was to subsist either by the long-repeated contributions of a friend, or the generosity of a casual acquaintance.” “When poverty overtook him, poor man,” says Gilbert White, “he had too much sensibility of temper to bear with his misfortunes, and so fell into a most deplorable state of mind.” “His mind,” says Hay, “had been so long harassed with anxiety, his distress had made so deep an impression on him, that he fell into a nervous disorder, followed by a great depression of spirits, which reduced him to the most deplorable weakness.” “In such untoward circumstances,” says the most careful of his modern editors, “Collins composed the poems which have secured him lasting fame, although even these, if Ragsdale's statement can be trusted, were written for the purpose of getting money.”¹¹⁴ It is doubtful whether the forced habit of reading the odes against an imaginary background of misery and hardship conduces to true appreciation; but, in any case, let us have the truth. It is one thing to be financially embarrassed after an

outbreak of extravagance and quite another to be oppressed by grinding poverty. We have been led to believe, in spite of the incident of the bailiff, that Collins's outlook was settled and cheerful from some time early in 1746, when he must have come into the income from his uncle's estate, and when, to Mulso's surprise, he began to appear in good clothes at all the gay places. According to the best evidence it was at about the same time that, being "in very high spirits," he began to think of publishing his odes, and reached, quite suddenly, the height of his creative powers.

Alexander Carlyle, who many years later found one of Collins's most important manuscripts lurking among his papers, was in London as a young man from about the beginning of March to the middle of May, 1746, and as he was acquainted with Thomson, Smollett, Andrew Millar, and other "literary people," must have had excellent opportunities of meeting Collins. Carlyle is believed to have been the author of an elegiac poem on Colonel Gardiner, part of which has a strong resemblance to Collins's "How Sleep the Brave." It has been suggested that Collins himself wrote the first ten lines, which must, in that case, be regarded as an earlier version of "How Sleep the Brave."¹¹⁵ It is not unlikely that he shared Carlyle's interest in Colonel Gardiner, and was willing to join in a tribute to his memory; for we have independent evidence that the hero had been an acquaintance, and probably a friend, of Collins's military uncle, Colonel Martin.¹¹⁶

The poem which we have called "How Sleep the Brave" was ultimately published with the somewhat awkward title, "Ode Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746." If we are right in regarding it as an offshoot from the lines on Colonel Gardiner, it must have been written later than April 16, for "Colonel Gardiner" has an allusion to the death of Lord Robert Kerr at the battle of Culloden. Whether the latter part of April can be described with strict accuracy as the beginning of the year is a point which might be debated endlessly. According to the old style of reckoning it is literally the beginning; but perhaps a more relevant consideration is that the poetic mind tends to follow nature rather than the calendar, and to think of the month of April as the beginning of the new life which the year is to bring forth.

It follows from what has been said that any collaboration between Collins and Carlyle must have been between the beginning

of March and the middle of May ; but " How Sleep the Brave," if it is an offshoot from ' Colonel Gardiner,' must have been written later than the date of the battle of Culloden. These facts lead us to trace the origin of " How Sleep the Brave " to the outburst of rejoicing which followed the news of the victory. " I was in the coffeehouse with Smollett," says Carlyle, " when the news of the battle of Culloden arrived, and when London all over was in a perfect uproar of joy."¹¹⁷ Carlyle, we gather, did not take part in the uproar ; but he had better reason than most Londoners to feel profoundly relieved, as he had himself fought against the rebels as a volunteer, and knew the extent of the danger. It would be natural to him to think of the fallen, who included some of his contemporaries at Edinburgh, and to single out Colonel Gardiner—already becoming a legendary figure, but, in his lifetime, a neighbour and intimate friend of the Carlyle family—as symbolic of the whole company. Collins also, besides being affected by the prevailing enthusiasm, must have had at least one personal reason for satisfaction, for his uncle, Colonel Martin, had taken a most conspicuous part in the action ;¹¹⁸ but Colonel Martin had happily survived, and Collins composed his tribute to " the brave, who sink to rest," without distinguishing an individual.

The tumult of joy at the suppression of the rebellion was accompanied or immediately followed by other feelings. " I doubt not," says a contemporary writer, speaking of the Duke of Cumberland, " but he will endeavour to increase his honours with the increase of years ; and after we have, by a successful war, procured tranquility to the public, or obtained it by honourable and advantageous treaties, I hope and believe that he will render himself conspicuous in promoting the fairer and more lovely triumphs of *Peace*, ' Dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births.' "¹¹⁹ In this spirit, and probably about this time, Collins wrote his ' Ode to Peace.'

Before long it began to be realised that the Duke of Cumberland and his advisers were devoid of the magnanimity expected of a true hero. " I saw not Smollett again for some time after," says Carlyle, in continuation of the paragraph from which one sentence has been quoted, " when he showed Smith and me the manuscript of his *Tears of Scotland*, which was published not long after, and had such a run of approbation. Smollett, though a Tory, was not a Jacobite, but he had the feelings of a Scotch gentleman on the reported cruelties that were said to be exercised

after the battle of Culloden." Those feelings were shared by many people who were neither Scotch nor Tories, and Collins has given them literary expression in the 'Ode to Mercy.'

There was still a further stage. A poet who had experienced this revulsion of feeling would very soon lose his taste for subjects even remotely connected with war and bloodshed, and would be glad to exchange the martial trumpet for the shepherd's pipe. Carlyle—if he is correctly identified as the author of 'Colonel Gardiner'—wrote an 'Ode to Evening' in the metre of Collins's odes 'To Pity' and 'To Peace.' Collins, it is supposed, assisted with the first five stanzas, or even wrote most of them himself, and afterwards expanded his contribution into the unrhymed 'Ode to Evening' which we know.

The poem entitled 'Ode to a Lady on the Death of Colonel Ross in the Action of Fontenoy,' has been left out of this chronological scheme because the several problems which it raises must be given special consideration. We first hear of it from a letter written by Joseph Warton to his brother Thomas, and happily preserved by the former's biographer:

You will wonder to see my name in an advertisement next week, so I thought I would apprise you of it. The case was this. Collins met me in Surrey, at Guildford Races, when I wrote out for him my Odes, and he likewise communicated some of his to me: and being both in very high spirits we took courage, resolved to join our forces, and to publish them immediately. I flatter myself that I shall lose no honour by this publication, because I believe these Odes, as they now stand, are infinitely the best things I ever wrote. You will see a very pretty one of Collins's on the death of Colonel Ross before Tournay. It is addressed to a lady who was Ross's intimate acquaintance, and who by the way is Miss Bett Goddard. Collins is not to publish the Odes unless he gets ten guineas for them.

I returned from Milford last night where I left Collins with my mother and sister, and he sets out to-day for London. .¹²⁰

This letter, we are told, is "without a date of time or place"; but, fortunately, we are not entirely without the means to supply the more important part of that omission. The extreme limits are May 11, 1745, the date of the battle of Fontenoy, and June 7, 1746, when the ode was published in Dodsley's 'Museum.' (Vol. i., pp. 215-7). We gather, however, that the poem was shown to Warton in manuscript at Guildford Races, so that we have a simple choice between the spring of 1745 and the same season of 1746. Such evidence as we have is strongly in favour of the later date. Though we are inclined to think that Collins's poverty was never quite

40

so extreme as some of his friends would have us believe, we do not imagine that he was in a position to do himself justice at fashionable resorts earlier than March, 1746, when his uncle's will came into operation; whereas in May of that year, as Mulso observed, he was appearing suitably dressed "at all yo gay Places," of which Guildford at the time of the Races was certainly one. Moreover, as the poem has a certain topical interest, and as it proved to be acceptable to contemporary editors, it is difficult to believe that it would not have been printed while the public was still excited over the news of the battle if it had existed at that time. It is true that in Dodsley's 'Collection' of 1748, in which it is republished, there is a note below the title: "Written May, 1745"; but that note, in all probability, was inserted by the editor as an assumption from the known date of the battle. In any case it is contradicted by a similar note at the head of "How Sleep the Brave": "Written in the same Year." As we have seen, we have Collins's own authority for the statement that "How Sleep the Brave" was written at the beginning of 1746.

The case for the later date would be strengthened still further if it could be proved that the poem as first submitted to Dodsley included two stanzas which Collins added, or perhaps restored, to the version appearing in his 'Odes,' published in December, 1746. Professor Bronson, noticing the absence of these stanzas from a still later text—that of Dodsley's 'Collection' of 1748—supposed that Collins had decided to omit them because he found on consideration that they "lessen the unity of the ode by drawing attention from the death of Ross and the sorrow of the lady to the state of the nation." ('Poems of William Collins,' pp. 110-1.) An alternative explanation, for which there is much to be said, is that there was a difference of opinion between author and editor, and that Dodsley had his way where his own publications were concerned, but Collins showed his real preference by re-inserting the omitted lines when he was free to do so. The two stanzas are as follows:

But lo where, sunk in deep despair,
Her garments torn, her bosom bare,
Impatient Freedom lies!
Her matted tresses madly spread,
To ev'ry sod which wraps the dead
She turns her joyless eyes.
Ne'er shall she leave that lowly ground
Till notes of triumph bursting round
Proclaim her reign restor'd:
Till William seek the sad retreat,

And, bleeding at her sacred feet,
Present the sated sword.

At what period would it be most natural to propose that Cumberland should return as an avenging hero to the scene of Fontenoy? Not immediately after the battle, when Cumberland was so little anxious to "seek tho sad retreat" that his dearest wish was to extricate himself from it without further disaster. The end of 1746, when the two stanzas made their first appearance in print, is hardly more probable, because at that time the Duke was already back in Flanders, and doing or preparing to do, so far as military conditions permitted, the very thing that the poet urges. The kind of emotion to which the lines would be exactly appropriate is that which swept the whole country after Culloden, which Handel has recorded for all time in 'Judas Maccabaeus,' and which finds its perfect expression in the aria "See the Conquering Hero Comes." It is said that the victorious army, drawn up on the field of Culloden after the battle, called out to the Duke as he rode by, "Now, Billy, for Flanders."¹²¹ That cry was soon to be echoed by the whole population; for it was universally felt that the Duke, having saved the country from invasion, would yet beat Marshall Saxe on his own ground and wipe out the memory of Fontenoy. To say, therefore, that the exhortation to William to "seek the sad retreat" impairs the unity of a poem on Fontenoy is entirely to lose sight of the historical background. In the contemporary mind the two themes were not only closely connected: they were essentially one.

P. L. CARVER.

(*To be continued.*)

¹⁰⁹ Mulso's 'Letters to Gilbert White.' p. 14.

¹¹⁰ *Review of English Studies*, Vol. vi (1930), p. 441.

¹¹¹ Aristotle, 'Poetics,' 1452 a 29 (Butcher's translation).

¹¹² See the evidence collected by Mr. H. O. White in his article in the *Review of English Studies* cited above (Vol. vi, p. 439).

¹¹³ See Mr. H. O. White's article cited above.

¹¹⁴ Bronson, 'Poems of William Collins,' p. xix.

¹¹⁵ See the article 'Collins and Alexander Carlyle' in the *Review of English Studies* for January, 1930.

¹¹⁶ Martin had written to the Duke of Richmond on May 14, 1745: "Col. Gardiner, since he is grown rich and Lazy, is ye most altered man I have seen in so short a time; he stoops, pockes out his head, and has ye appearance of a Very Old Man." ('A Duke and His Friends,' p. 461).

¹¹⁷ 'Autobiography' (ed. 1910), pp. 198-9.

¹¹⁸ This statement is supported by the great

42

authority of Wolfe, who wrote to a friend the day after the battle: "They [Barrell's Regiment] were, however, surrounded by superiority, and would have been all destroyed had not Col. Martin with his Regiment (the left of the 2nd line of Foot) mov'd to their assistance, prevented mischief, and by a well-timed fire destroyed a great number of them and obliged them to run off." (Beckles Willson, 'Life and Letters of James Wolfe,' p. 63).

119 The *Craftsman*, No. 1035, reprinted by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. xvi, p. 244.

120 John Wooll, 'Biographical Memoirs of the late Revd. Joseph Warton, D.D. (1806), pp. 14-15, note.

121 See the 'D.N.B.' under 'William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland.'

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* pp. 128, 146, 167, 182, 201.)

FROM the little that we know of the career of Charles Ross, it does not seem likely that he and Collins had ever met. He was born on Feb. 9, 1721, and in 1732 succeeded his great-uncle, General Charles Ross, as owner of the estate of Balnagown.¹²² About 1740¹²³ he took a commission in the Scots Guards. In 1741 he was elected Member of Parliament for the County of Ross by twenty votes against fourteen for his opponent (Wm. MacGill, *op. cit.* No. 266) and thereafter incurred some criticism by his "constant way of voting with ye Opposition" (*Ibid.*, No. 268). A fragment of one of his letters, dated Feb. 25, 1742, has survived, and contains the fateful sentence: "I set out for Flanders very soon, what to do the Lord knows" (*Ibid.*, No. 723). That accords with the fact that, after an unexpected delay, the Guards embarked at Woolwich for Ostend on May 26, 1742,¹²⁴ and did not return home until after the engagement in which Ross lost his life. "Altogether," says the editor of the family papers, "we see a brave and generous youth, more inclined for soldiering than business, yet in politics with a mind of his own, and no time-server" (*Ibid.* No. 724).

It may be a significant fact that a circumstantial account of Ross's death—the earliest known—is found in a letter addressed by Colonel John Munro to Duncan Forbes of Culloden, the famous Lord President of the Court of Session. The writer begins by assuring Forbes "that your Son is in good Health, and suffered nothing but the loss of his horse, who was shot in our retreat." He then relates how "poor Charles Ross of Balnagown" was shot with a musket-ball early in the action, and died the same night at Headquarters.¹²⁵ From this it appears that the fallen soldier had been well known to Duncan Forbes, and therefore, presumably, to Forbes's son John, a fellow Guardsman of about his own age,¹²⁶ who, as we understand, had survived the battle. Forbes had been under the tuition of Patrick Murdoch, the friend of James Thomson, and has been identified by M. Morel¹²⁷ as the "joyous youth" described in the 'Castle of Indolence.'¹²⁸ There is ample evidence for the statement that Collins himself was another member of

Thomson's circle at Richmond,¹²⁹ and M.
Morel is inclined, though not without some
hesitation,¹³⁰ to recognise him as the person
"of special grave remark" described a little
earlier in the poem:

Oft as he traversed the cerulean field,
And mark'd the clouds that drove before
the wind,
Ten thousand glorious systems would be
build,
Ten thousand great ideas fill'd his mind;
But with the clouds they fled, and left no
trace behind.¹³¹

It appears that John Forbes's regiment, the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, did not take part in the battle of Culloden, but was one of those held in reserve to defend London in case the invaders should break through. Afterwards a detachment was stationed at Kingston-on-Thames,¹³² which is within easy reach of Richmond. Alexander Carlyle tells us that while in London he "dined frequently with a club of officers, mostly Scotch," including many "who had been spared at the fatal battle of Fontenoy."¹³³ John Forbes, as a Scotchman, an officer, and a survivor of Fontenoy, was clearly eligible for membership; and when we remember that he was also an inhabitant of the "Castle of Indolence," and that his former tutor, Murdoch, as well as Thomson himself, had been introduced to Carlyle,¹³⁴ we cannot doubt that Collins, through his acquaintance with Thomson's circle, had ample opportunities both of meeting Carlyle and of hearing about the death of Ross. An almost certain sign that he had not known Ross personally is his mistake about the hero's rank. It can be proved that Ross was not a Colonel but a Captain at the time of his death,¹³⁵ and Collins could hardly have conferred the higher dignity upon him in the title of the poem if he had known that he was only twenty-three years of age.

It is easy to see how the poem might have come into being without the assistance of Miss Elizabeth Goddard, to whom, as Warton tells us, it is addressed. That elusive young lady has worried Collins's biographers far more, probably, than she ever worried Collins himself. Having regard to Warton's several statements, taken in conjunction with the title, we are bound to believe that she had a real existence and that Collins knew and admired her. It was rumoured that she was one day older than Collins himself, and that Collins referred to this fact when he said that he "came into the world a day after the fair." The clearest evidence of the poet's devotion is Warton's recollection that the poem as originally written contained the line, "If drawn

by all a lover's art," afterwards revised into the form which we know: "If, weak to sooth so soft an heart." Warton can hardly have devised that exhibition of candour out of his own imagination. On the other hand, it is permissible to doubt the assertion that Miss Goddard belonged to the village of Harting, in Sussex, where no trace of her family has ever been discovered. The lines sometimes cited as evidence of the fact,

Ev'n humble Harting's cottag'd vale
Shall learn the sad-repeated tale,
And bid her shepherds weep.

admit of, and almost demand, a different interpretation: that the hero's fame should spread from one end of the country to the other, from his native town in the north of Scotland to a village in the extreme south of England. Why should it be remarkable that *even* Harting should learn the tale of Ross if its small population included the lady whom he had intended to marry?¹³⁶ The most natural explanation of the mention of Harting is that it was a place well-known to Collins himself.

It is disappointing that we do not hear of Miss Goddard again, for we should have liked to know whether she found better consolation than the complimentary verses of an unwelcome admirer. When next we hear of Collins he seems to have recovered from any disappointment he may have felt. On Aug. 1, 1746, Mulso writes to Gilbert White:

I have just receiv'd a Letter from Collin's, dated Antwerp. He gives me a very descriptive Journal of his Travells thro' Holland to that Place, which He is in Raptures about, & promises a more particular Account of: He is in high Spirits, tho' near ye French. He was just setting out for ye Army, which He says, are in a poor way, & He met many wounded & sick Countreymen as He travell'd from Helvoet-Sluys.¹³⁷

It is very difficult to believe that Collins could have written in this cheerful strain if his object had been, as is commonly supposed, to beg his long-suffering uncle for a further allowance of money. It can be proved that Colonel Martin's regiment was still in Scotland at the time when Collins set out on his travels; and, though Collins may have known that his uncle would soon be going abroad again, he could hardly have intended, if he was desperately poor, to spend time in exploring the beauties of Holland before he could be certain when and where the regiment would arrive. After Culloden, according to the official history, "the King's regiment was encamped for a short time near Perth; it subsequently marched southward in charge of

prisoners: and during the summer it was ordered to the Netherlands, where the war between France and the allies was continued."¹³⁸ More precise information is afforded by a sentence in a letter addressed by Lord Albemarle to the Duke of Richmond from Fort Augustus, Scotland, on July 13, 1746: "Martin marched two Days ago to Perth, and from thence to Holland."¹³⁹ The tale is resumed by Captain Richard Meggott, another officer in the King's Regiment, who writes to the Duke of Richmond from Burnt Island, Fifeshire, on Aug. 1, 1746:

It appears, then, that on Aug. 1 the regiment had not actually embarked for Flanders, though it was on the point of doing so; and before that date, as we learn from Mulso's letter, Collins had had time to explore the country, form impressions, and give a "descriptive Journal of his Travells." Whatever may have been his intention in going abroad at this time, it cannot have been to consult Colonel Martin about the state of his finances. The natural and obvious explanation is that he went for the mere pleasure of adventure.

The date of his return from Flanders is unknown, but it must have been before the end of the year. The December number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* announced among "Books and Pamphlets published this Month":

5. Odes on several descriptive and allegoric subjects. By W. Collins. pr. 1s. Millar.

6 Odes on several subjects. By Jos. Warton. B.A. pr. 1s. 6d. Dodsley.

The two poets, we remember, had decided originally to publish a volume jointly. It is possible that the plan had been revised since the first discussion at Guildford Races; but perhaps it is more likely that Dodsley, who knew the taste of the town, had refused Collins's contribution while accepting Warton's. In that case Collins would turn naturally to the more generous and enterprising Millar, and arrange to publish his own volume independently. Dodsley, in the meantime, had accepted Collins's ode 'To a Lady' for his 'Museum,' stipulating, perhaps, for the omission of certain stanzas. (See *ante* p. 204).

The cautious Dodsley, as is well known, proved to be wise in his generation. While Warton's poems had a fair measure of success, and went into a second edition the following year, the demand for Collins's was negligible. Tradition has it that when, in 1749, Collins came into a legacy by the death of Colonel Martin, he returned the 10 guineas

which Millar had advanced, and burnt the remaining copies with his own hands. The story is probably true except for the date, which depends upon the common belief that Collins could not have raised 10 guineas until after his uncle's death. One of the very few people to acquire a copy straight from the press was the poet Gray, who expressed his critical opinion in a letter dated Dec. 27, 1746, which is well known.

In 1747, jointly with his sisters, Collins sold his interest in the rents and tithes of St. Bartholomew¹²⁰ (see *ante* p. 132) and the premises in East Street formerly occupied by his father.¹²¹ This was strictly in accordance with the terms of Mrs. Collins's will, and the only occasion for surprise is that it had not been done earlier. The long delay, whatever may have caused it, is fatal to the common belief that Collins sold his inheritance with indecent haste before the end of 1744, squandered the proceeds in riotous living, and then spent four or five miserable years in browbeating his relatives for the necessities of life. The more imaginative of his biographers usually explain that his privations at this critical period undermined his health, impaired his creative powers, distracted his thoughts from such undertakings as the 'Review of the Advancement of Learning,' and even prepared the way for a terrible mental disease. All this affords promising material for a novel; but Collins would not have recognised himself as the hero.

P. L. CARVER.

(*To be continued.*)

¹²² Ross Pedigree, quoted by Robertson (*Continuation of Crawford's 'Description of the Shire of Renfrew,'* 1818, p. 519).

¹²³ The date is uncertain. Sir Frederick Maurice ('History of the Scots Guards,' Vol. ii, p. 354) gives Ross's service with the regiment as 1741-1745; but his father wrote on Sept. 18, 1740: "I wish ye town election in Tayn may not keep Charles too long in ye country since he is oblige to be with ye regiment next month and they are at Bristoll." (Wm. MacGill, 'Old Ross-shire and Scotland from Tain and Balnagown Documents,' No. 207).

¹²⁴ Sir Frederick Maurice, 'History of the Scots Guards,' vol. i, pp. 117-8.

¹²⁵ 'Culloden Papers,' p. 200.

¹²⁶ Whether there was any relationship between the two is uncertain; but David Ross of Kindeace had married Grizel Forbes, the sister of Duncan Forbes ('Some Kindeace Letters,' p. 1), and as the Forbes and Ross families were both very prominent in the same part of Scotland, and both Whigs and

Hanoverians, there had probably been other marriages.

127 'James Thomson, Sa Vie et ses Oeuvres,' p. 607.

128 Canto I, stanzas lxiii-lxiv.

129 We know on Ragsdale's authority that Collins had already spent some time at Richmond in the days of his real or supposed poverty, probably before March, 1746. According to Murdoch, the biographer of Thomson, he had "lived some time at Richmond" before Thomson's death in 1748. It must be remembered that Murdoch lived at Stradishall, in Suffolk, and might easily have assumed that Collins was an inhabitant of Richmond if he met him there several times.

The probability is that Collins divided his time between Richmond and the metropolis from 1746 to 1748. Strongly as he must have been attracted to Richmond, he had also a taste for the gay life of the city, and must have thought it important to keep in touch with editors, publishers, and the society of Drury Lane.

130 *Op. cit.*, p. 607, note 4.

131 Stanza lix. There is, of course, no certainty that these lines refer to Collins, though it is an interesting possibility. The case rests entirely upon internal evidence which would hardly be worth considering if it were not for the fact that the number of candidates for the honour is strictly limited. We should not have hesitated to recognise Coleridge as the subject if the poem had been written fifty years later.

132 Packe, 'An Historical Record of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, or Oxford Blues,' pp. 90-1.

133 'Autobiography,' 204-5.

134 *Ibid.*, p. 206.

135 Sir Frederick Maurice, 'History of the Scots Guards,' Vol. i, p. 140, and Vol. ii, p. 354. All the contemporary notices of Ross's death describe him correctly as Captain.

136 That there had been an understanding of some kind between Ross and Miss Goddard seems to have been believed by Collins himself and assumed by contemporary gossip. It is very doubtful, however, whether there was any recognised engagement. In the several letters referring to Ross, both before and after his death, published in 'Old Ross-shire and Scotland,' there is not the remotest allusion to his intended marriage. Another negative fact which must be taken as significant is that Ross did not leave a will. It is true that he had no power to dispose of the Balnagown estate, which, by the terms of his great-uncle's will, reverted to his father, and afterwards to his brother; but he must have had some trifles of private property which he would have wished to go to his *fiancée* if he had one, and he cannot have been blind to the possibility of his death when he went abroad on active service. Everything that we hear of him gives the impression that he was a careful and conscientious young man, most unlikely to neglect an obvious duty.

137 Letters to Gilbert White,' p. 15.

43

138 'Historical Record of the King's Liverpool Regiment of Foot,' p. 53.

139 'Earl of March, 'A Duke and His Friends,' p. 523.

W^t I^t Art Aug^t the 12th of last Month, and for a S^rys I^t Art [ie] March r^ead^d Per... W^t S^ril the 18th eight days to come I^t Art to ret^r B^tout, and... arrived in this day... yesterd^y... Our H^rors^s and art^rys were embark'd yesterd^y, and this morning to three Regt^{nts}. So that we sh^t out for Waterford^t to carry us out of the Harbour, but that we're told we must not expect before Monday. (*Ibid.* pp. 15-7).

140 'Correspondence of Thomas Gray' (1835), No. 129.

14^t See the interesting letter of Mr. W. L. Wilmshurst, of Hallerfield, to *The Times Literary Supplement* for Feb. 9, 1933, beginning: "I possess two old, ear^t dated May 1, 1747, bearing the signature of William Collins, the Chichester poet, and his sisters Elizabeth and Anne. The deeds relate to property in Fact Street, Chichester, where the poet was born."

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* pp. 128, 146, 167, 182, 201, 220.)

THERE is no reason to suppose that Collins allowed his disappointment at the failure of his 'Odes' to prey on his mind. Mr. Frederick Page, four years ago,¹⁴² proposed to attribute to him a long essay in Dodsley's 'Museum' for July 4, 1747, entitled 'Of the Essential Excellencies in Poetry.' At the risk of a digression, I should like to express my own belief that Mr. Page is right, and, perhaps, to add another to his arguments. The essayist contends that the mark of the true poet is creative genius, and continues, in the passage quoted by Mr. Page:

It is this great, this divine Power that distinguishes true Poets from mere Versifiers; the latter only copy Nature, and that but faintly; the former surpass Nature, and transcend her. The same idea is expressed in Collins's ode 'On the Poetical Character,' as Mr. Page reminds us. That, in itself, is of very little help, as many other parallels could be cited; but it is important for a particular reason to notice the similar words of Horace:

neque enim concludere versum
Dixeris esse satis; neque, si quis scribat, uti
nos,
Sermoni propiora, putet hunc esse poetam.
Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum, des nominis huius
honorem.

1 'Sat.' iv. (40-4).

It can be proved that Collins had much more than a general acquaintance with the satire from which these words are taken, for it was a subsequent line (62) which sprang to his lips on the famous occasion when Hampton upset his tea-table: "Invenias etiam disiecti membra poetae."¹⁴³ This may help us to read a certain meaning into the difficult passage in the ode 'On the Poetical Character,' where we are told that the Creator of the universe:

Long by the lov'd enthusiast woo'd,
Himself in some diviner mood,
Retiring, sate with her alone,
And place'd her on his sapphire throne.

Who, it is asked, is this "lov'd enthusiast"? If we take the Horatian satire into account it will be evident that to be "in some diviner mood" is to be one of those rare persons on whom the *mens divinior* is bestowed. In the language of the essay a possible equivalent of *mens divinior* is "enthusiasm," for it is

said that the creative genius of Milton "rose from that enthusiasm which the Ancients esteem'd, and I think Divine." The "lov'd enthusiast," then, is the personification of "enthusiasm" in this sense, or the *mens divinior*; and the meaning may be rendered: "Having long been susceptible to enthusiasm, and himself possessed of the *mens divinior*." If this interpretation is correct it will be seen that the essay and the poem are related not only directly but also by their common relation to the Horatian satire, and that is another reason, besides those adduced by Mr. Page, for attributing the essay to Collins.

A letter which he addressed to his friend John Gilbert Cooper, on Nov. 10, 1747, reveals that Collins was still on excellent terms with himself and the world at that time. This letter is the first of only two which have survived, and as it has been published more than once, and carefully annotated by Mr. H. O. White,¹⁴⁴ it may be assumed to be well known. It is mainly concerned with the arrangements for the publication of a literary journal, originally to be called the "Clarendon Review": a name which Collins now proposes to alter to "The Friendly Examiner, or Letters of Polémon and Philéthus; or, the Plain Dealer, with the same Appendix." The tone of the letter is that of a person who is happy in the pursuit of a fascinating hobby.

Thomas Warton recalled many years later that he

often saw Collins in London in 1750. This was before his illness. He then told me of his intended History of the Revival of Learning, and proposed a scheme of a review, to be called the Clarendon Review, and to be printed at the university press, under the conduct and authority of the university.

As the letter to Cooper proves that Collins was absorbed in the scheme at the end of 1747, it is difficult to believe that he proposed it as a novelty in 1750. Warton, however, at the time when he wrote his memoir, was certainly capable of miscalculating by two or three years, and it is probable that his frequent meetings with Collins took place earlier than he supposed in later life. It does not appear that the "Clarendon Review," by that or any other name, ever reached the stage of print. "When it is remembered," says Professor Bronson, "that the reviews of the eighteenth century were booksellers' organs, written by literary hacks, Collins's idea is seen to be original and bold. It has since been realized, in substance, by the great independent reviews established in the first quarter of the present [nineteenth] century;

in 1750 the project probably was not practicable."¹⁴⁵

The 'History of the Revival of Learning,' which Warton mentions in the passage just quoted, must be the 'Review of the Advancement of Learning' under a different name, and perhaps in a different and more elaborate form. It is easy to believe that Collins had reluctantly abandoned the work at a time of financial stress, and was glad to resume it during this energetic and comparatively prosperous period. "I have just heard," Warton concludes, "from undoubted authority, that Collins had finished a Preliminary Dissertation to be prefixed to his History of the Restoration of Learning, and that it was written with great judgment, precision, and knowledge of the subject."

The social and intellectual life of Richmond must have been more attractive than ever at the time when Thomson was writing the 'Castle of Indolence,' and perhaps it is for that reason that Collins was inactive for the next twelve months. On Aug. 27, 1748, Thomson died suddenly from the effects of medical attention following a chill. "Only one gentleman," says Murdoch, "Mr. Collins, who had lived some time at Richmond, but forsook it when Mr. Thomson died, wrote an Ode to his memory." Whether Collins had ever been a resident of Richmond must be considered doubtful, as we have seen; but it is easy to believe that he avoided the associations of the "whitening spire" and the "varied landscape" after this event. The 'Ode Occasion'd by the Death of Mr. Thomson' was first published by Manby and Cox in June, 1749. Probably it had undergone a long process of revision.

Colonel Edmund Martin, "lying sick in the City of Chichester in the County of Sussex," made his will¹⁴⁶ on April 19, 1749, and died a week later.¹⁴⁷ He had been wounded at Val in 1747; but it is not true, as is usually stated, that he had been invalided home after this engagement and had spent the rest of his life in retirement at Chichester. He had wished to retire in May, 1746, pleading that he "had been more than 40 years an Officer, was upwards of 60 years of age, lyable to the Infirmitys of that Stage of Life"; but after distinguishing himself at Culloden¹⁴⁸ he had regretted his decision, though "Genl. Wolfe and his Son" still urged him to act upon it. All this he explains in a letter to the Duke of Richmond dated "Ginneken near Breda," Jan. 21, 1748.¹⁴⁹ His subsequent letters to the Duke

show that he was still on active service at various places in Flanders on April 18, July 25, Aug. 19 and Sept. 21. The war was concluded by the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle on Oct. 18, and there is no reason to doubt that Colonel Martin stayed to the end.

Dr. Johnson's statement that Collins came into a sum of about £2,000 by his uncle's death must be received with caution. Colonel Martin, as we have seen, had sold his property at Cackham in 1717,¹⁵⁰ probably in order to obtain promotion by purchase. The only real property mentioned in his will is "my copyhold estates in the Manors of Selsey and Somerly," which were left to a nephew, Abraham Martin. It appears, however, from the will of John Martin,¹⁵¹ apparently the Colonel's uncle, who died in 1703, that the Selsey estate was worth £10 a year and the Somerly estate £9 a year, so that there is no evidence here of wealth. The residue, if Johnson was correctly informed, must have amounted to £6,000 or more, as Collins's share was only a third of the whole; but in the eighteenth century the value of money was considerably greater than at present, and a military man having a private income based on a capital of £6,000 would have passed as being in affluent circumstances. If Colonel Martin was so favoured by fortune he must have given a strangely false impression to the Higher Command. General Hawley, writing to the Duke of Richmond on June 16, 1746, speaks of Martin's "ignorance that has appeared in some things and his mean appearance," adding: "I assure you I have nothing to say against the man but that he is beyonde his sphere and was surely intended by God Allmighty, when made, to be only a Capt."¹⁵² Lord March, in introducing this letter, says that Hawley's "uncharitable remarks upon poor Colonel Martin denote a tendency to merciless criticism of those whose lack of means precluded them from competing with their better-dressed brother officers."

Lord Albemarle, who succeeded Hawley in the command of Fort Augustus, was much more friendly to Colonel Martin, and, as Lord March observes, "disposed to take a much more charitable view of his failings," but even he admits that "his forehead is rough, besides being shabby in his dress."¹⁵³ It is impossible to reconcile these statements with the story of the triple legacy of £2,000 except on the hypothesis that the Colonel was secretly a miser. There is reason to believe that Collins did enrich himself to some extent in 1749 by the sale of property at

Cackham, and it was probably some rumour of that transaction which, in the confused recollection of his friends in London many years later, grew into the legend of Colonel Martin's bequest.¹⁴²

We have found that the premises in East Street and the mythical rectory of St. Bartholomew had been sold in 1747, in accordance with the will of Mrs. Collins. Apparently there was some reluctance to let the Cackham estate, bequeathed by Alderman Collins to his wife and by her to her children, go out of the family. We learn from the will of Collins's sister Elizabeth (P.C.C. 'Pinfold,' 183), who died in 1754, that the three persons concerned had provided for the disposal of this property by a legal agreement signed on Oct. 16, 1749. The will itself is a complicated document, and the details cannot be fully elucidated in the absence of that "Tripartite Indenture of Settlement" to which it refers at the beginning. The general intention, however, is sufficiently clear. The effect of the tripartite agreement was that Elizabeth and Anne Collins had acquired from their brother his third share of "all those Copyhold or Customary Lands, Tenements and Premises with the Appurtenances lying and being within and held of the Manor of Cackham," due to him under their mother's will; but in the first instance their comparatively wealthy cousin, George Payne, had effected the purchase in trust on their behalf. It is technically true, therefore, that Collins "disposed of the property inherited from his mother to his relative Mr. George Payne," and it must be true, in consequence, that he received a certain amount of money in 1749, which happens to be the year of Colonel Martin's death; but it is not true that he effected the sale immediately after the death of Mrs. Collins, and "soon dissipated his small fortune." (See *ante* p. 182).

P. L. CARVER.

(*To be continued.*)

¹⁴² *The Times Literary Supplement* for 1935, p. 488. See also Professor A. S. P. Woodhouse's important essay, 'Collins and the Creative Imagination,' in *Studies in English by Members of the University of Toronto*, 1931.

¹⁴³ See *ante*, p. 117.

¹⁴⁴ See the *Review of English Studies* for 1927 (Vol. iii, p. 12).

¹⁴⁵ 'Poems of William Collins,' p. xxiii.

¹⁴⁶ P.C.C. 'Lisle,' 153.

¹⁴⁷ Dalton, 'George the First's Army,' Vol. ii, p. 165, *note* 1.

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- 148 See *ante*, p. 203.
- 149 Earl of March, 'A Duke and His Friends,' p. 564.
- 150 See *ante*, p. 182.
- 151 Among the old Chichester wills in the District Probate Registry, Winchester.
- 152 Earl of March, 'A Duke and His Friends,' p. 511.
- 153 *Ibid.*, p. 524.
- 154 I should, perhaps, have remembered the possibility that Colonel Martin had made a certain amount of money by the sale of his commission. What sort of sum he would be likely to acquire in this way I cannot say, but surely not enough to make the difference between poverty and wealth. Perhaps some reader of 'N. & Q.' could say what was the usual value of a Lieutenant-Colonel's commission in the eighteenth century.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* pp. 128, 146, 167, 182, 201, 220,
240.)

LATER in 1749, according to Alexander Carlyle, Collins composed his ode 'On the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland.' It is well known that the poem is mentioned by Johnson, in his 'Life' of Collins, as having been known to the Wartons; and that Carlyle, on reading Johnson's 'Life,' searched for a copy which he believed to be among his papers, found it, and communicated it to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1788.¹⁵⁵ It is not to be expected that Carlyle's recollection should have been perfectly clear after so great a lapse of time. The crucial passage of his letter to the Royal Society of Edinburgh reads :

Soon after I found the poem, I shewed it to Mr. Home, who told me that it had been addressed to him by Mr. Collins, on his leaving London in the year 1749: that it was hastily composed and incorrect; but that he would one day find leisure to look it over with care. Mr. Collins and Mr. Home had been made acquainted by Mr. John Barrow¹⁵⁶ (the *cordial youth* mentioned in the first stanza), who had been, for some time, at the University of Edinburgh; had been a volunteer, along with Mr. Home, in the year 1746; had been taken prisoner with him at the battle of Falkirk, and had escaped, together with him and five or six other gentlemen, from the Castle of Down. Mr. Barrow was paymaster in America, in the war that commenced in 1756, and died in that country.

The first sentence clearly conveys that it was Home who left London in 1749, and that Collins presented him with the poem as a parting gift; but that is not easy to reconcile with the further statement that the "cordial youth," Barrow, lived at Winchester, and that Collins and Home were also at Winchester at the critical time. The poem itself affords clear evidence that Collins and Home were "together on a visit" to Barrow's place of residence, and about to bid him farewell, but the allusion to the Lavant implies that the scene of the parting was neither Winchester nor London, but somewhere in the neighbourhood of Chichester:

Go, not unmindful of that cordial yooth
Whom, long-endear'd thou leav'st by
Lavant's side;
Together let us wish him lasting truth,
And joy untainted, with his destin'd bride.

Barrow, then, was either living "by Lavant's side" or making a long stay there. Collins seems to suppose that he intended to settle in this neighbourhood after his marriage, and it appears that he actually did so. In the register of baptisms of the Church of All Saints, Chichester, for the year 1757, we find this entry :

Mary Eliz. [daughter] of Thos. Barrow Esq. & Mary his wife. 6 June.¹⁵⁷

Still further evidence that Carlyle's mention of "Winchester" is an error for *Chichester* is provided by Carlyle himself. Among his unpublished papers is a copy, incomplete and undated, of a letter¹⁵⁸ written, apparently, in 1784, immediately after the finding of the manuscript. In all particulars except one it agrees with the letter to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The exception will be noticed in the following sentence : " It had been hastily wrote on John Home's leaving Chichester which stands on the Lavant (where Collins was a native) in the year 1749." The probability is that Collins and Barrow had met in October, 1749, when Collins must have gone to Chichester to complete the legal formalities for the sale of the Cackham property to George Payne.

We are able to amplify Carlyle's account of Barrow with a few more details. According to his own statement he was " appointed deputy Paymaster of the Forces in North America by Lord Duplin and Mr. Potter on the 2d of April 1757."¹⁵⁹ He was at Fort Ligonier in August, 1759, and at Pittsburg in September and October, as we know from four of his letters preserved in the Bouquet correspondence.¹⁶⁰ By 1770 he was in England again and living at Chiswick, and in that year he made his will¹⁶¹ and asked the War Office for a refund of £5,800, expended by him " in defraying the contingent Expenses of his Employment."¹⁶² He died, presumably, in 1780, as his will was proved on Nov. 13 of that year. The probate note describes him as " late of Chiswick in the County of Middlesex but at New York." Carlyle is right, therefore, in saying that he died in America.

Mrs. Mary Barrow, " widow of the late Thomas Barrow Esquire Deputy Paymaster General of His Majesty's Forces in North America " died at her house in Portman Square, London, in 1814, at the age of eighty-seven, leaving some considerable property in Sussex and large estates in Canada to her three children.¹⁶³ From the fact that she was buried at Chichester,¹⁶⁴ though she had

Ived in London for many years, we must conclude that she was a native of the place and had always thought of it as her home. She might well have been on friendly terms with the Collins family in her youth, and it is easy to imagine how Collins, returning to "Lavant's side" in 1749, had met her as the "destin'd bride" of Barrow and made the acquaintance of Barrow himself.

In October, 1749, the *Gentleman's Magazine* paid Collins the compliment of printing his 'Song from Shakespeare's Cymbeline' at the head of the 'Poetical Essays' for the month; but with an alteration which should serve as a warning to modern editors of the poems.¹⁶⁵ "I remember," says Nichols, speaking of Edward Cave:

that, calling on him once, he gave me to read the beautiful poem of Collins, written for Shakespeare's Cymbeline, "To fair Fidele's grassy tomb," which, though adapted to a particular circumstance in the play, Cave was for inserting in his Magazine, without any reference to the subject. I told him it would lose [much?] of its beauty if it were so published: this he could not see; nor could he be convinced of the propriety of the name *Fidele*; he thought *Pastora* a better and so printed it.¹⁶⁶

That, happily, settles the question whether Collins was responsible for the revision; but if Nichols's story had not come down to us we might have expected Professor Bronson to argue, as he argues in the parallel case of the ode 'To a Lady,' that "Collins was living in or near London, in full possession of his faculties, and it is probable that the new text represented his latest revision of the poem."¹⁶⁷ Dodsley, though a more agreeable character, had something of Cave's inclination to magnify his office.

The ode 'On the Popular Superstitions' is the only evidence we have that Collins's powers had developed by practice since the *annus mirabilis*, 1746. It is not unlikely that, if the whole of his work had survived, we should find that the autumn of 1749 was the beginning of a period of equal brilliance with less conscious effort. Mr. A. D. McKillop has discovered from an advertisement in two contemporary journals that Manby and Cox had ready for publication in February, 1750, "An Epistle to the Editor of Fairfax his translation of Tasso, by Wm. Collins."¹⁶⁸ The occasion of the poem was probably, as Mr. McKillop suggests, the appearance of a new edition of Fairfax's translation in 1749. No other trace of it has been found, and it is not likely that the poem will ever be recovered.

Mr. H. O. White has discovered that 'The Passions,' with music by Dr. William Hayes and a new ending supplied by the Earl of Lichfield to suit the music, was performed at Oxford on July 2, 1750.¹⁶⁹ Collins was delighted with the compliment, and wrote to Hayes from Chichester on Nov. 8,¹⁷⁰ to express his appreciation and to ask for a copy of the score. He also offers a poem "of my better judgment" and "on a nobler subject," which is to be "the Music of the Grecian Theatre." It is regrettable that Hayes, when he received this letter, did not call for his horses and chariots and make a dash to Chichester to secure the poem the same day, finished or unfinished. Had it survived it might well have proved to be Collins's most elaborate composition, if not his greatest. Besides having the requisite knowledge to introduce "the various characters with which the chorus was concerned, as Œdipus, Medea, Electra, Orestes, etc., etc.," Collins was "passionately fond of music," as Gilbert White tells us. His grandfather must have been an accomplished musician, and his uncle Charles at least had musical taste.

The elder of Collins's sisters, Elizabeth, was married on Oct. 15, 1750, to Nathaniel Tanner, a Lieutenant in the Buffs.¹⁷¹ The bride was forty-six and the bridegroom, probably, a few years older. Tanner must have been a tough soldier, as he had served for twenty-five years in the ranks before being commissioned in 1741, and had been wounded at Fontenoy.¹⁷² Mrs. Tanner's will, already noticed,¹⁷³ was proved on June 17, 1754, and the record shows that she died in Scotland. Her husband had resigned his commission on Jan. 25 of the same year.

Anne Collins, the younger sister, was married still later in life to Lieutenant Hugh Sempill, on Jan. 28, 1755.¹⁷⁴ Little or nothing is known of Sempill, but it is not true, as Moy Thomas would have us believe, that he was the third son of the eleventh Lord Sempill.¹⁷⁵ A glance at the two wills,¹⁷⁶ the one proved on Feb. 8, 1763, and the other on Sept. 14, 1764, will show that Hugh Sempill of Chichester and Captain the Hon. Hugh Sempill of the Marines were two entirely different persons. After Sempill's death the widow married Thomas Durnford, Rector of Bramdean and Vicar of Harting, who is believed to have treated her unkindly.

The greater part of Collins's life after 1750 is understood to have been spent at Chichester, in the care of his sister Anne, who, according to Ragsdale, rescued him from a madhouse at

Chelsea. There can be no doubt that he was insane for long periods in the opinion of the doctors, though whether he would be considered so to-day is doubtful. The eighteenth century knew no distinction between insanity and overstrained nerves, and the fact that Collins died young is a sign that the illness had a physical basis. A modern doctor would have examined his teeth and enquired about the symptoms of rheumatism, and would probably have cured him in a few weeks either by dental treatment or by cutting off certain articles of diet and prescribing large quantities of milk and raw fruit.

A few anecdotes of the last years at Chichester are recorded by Johnson and Warton, and are well known. It is not likely that they will ever be augmented by fresh discoveries. Collins died, according to the tablet in St. Andrew's Church, on June 12, 1759, and was buried, as the parish register shows, on the 15th. It is probable that the house in the Close where he had lived for some years with his sister, was the house which his grandfather had once inhabited, and had come into his possession as part of the property left by his uncle Charles.

Next week I hope to conclude this series with some notes on certain poems of doubtful authenticity.

P. L. CARVER.

(*To be concluded.*)

155 See the *Transactions of the Society*, Vol. i.

156 His real name was Thomas, not John, as Mr. H. W. Garrod observes (see his letters to *The Times Literary Supplement* for 1929, pp. 624 and 668). In his 'Autobiography' (p. 517) Carlyle speaks of Barrow and his wife as "Mr. and Mrs. Barry."

157 Ad. MSS. 5699, f. 166; 39475A (7), f. 584.

158 I am greatly indebted to Mrs. Carlyle Bell, the present owner of the Carlyle papers, for allowing me to see this correspondence.

159 P.R.O. T. 1/478/482.

160 Ad. MS 21644, ff. 337, 385, 404, 432.

161 P.C.C. 'Collins,' 505.

162 See note 159 above.

163 P.C.C. 'Bridport,' 455.

164 Ad. MS 39475A (7), f. 582.

165 Cp. *aute*, p. 204.

166 'Literary Anecdotes,' Vol. v, p. 53.

167 'Poems of William Collins,' p. 109.

168 See Mr. McKillop's letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* for 1928, p. 965.

169 *Review of English Studies*, Vol. iii, p. 19.

170 In the well known letter first published by Seward in 'Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons' (ed. 1798, Vol. ii, p. 584).

171 Ad. MS 39422, f. 255.

172 For details of Tanner's career, see

C. R. B. Knight, 'Historical Records of The Buffs,' Vol. iii, Pt. 2, p. 669. His death is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1767 (p. 525).

173 See *ante*, p. 242.

174 Ad. MS. 39422, f. 257.

175 It is doubtful, in spite of his name, whether he was even distantly related to Lord Sempill, as the present Lord Sempill found no tracee of him though he very kindly searched the whole of the family papers in order to answer an enquiry. Lord Sempill adds that "the eleventh Lord Sempill," to whom Moy Thomas refers, would be more correctly styled the twelfth Lord Sempill, as the Baroness Ann Sempill is known as the ninth holder of the title.

176 P.C.C. 'Caesar,' 89, and 'Simpson,' 368.

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF WILLIAM COLLINS.

(See *ante* pp. 128, 146, 167, 182, 201,
220, 240, 258.)

IN the second article of this series I mentioned some juvenile verses 'On Hercules' as having been claimed for Collins in 1828 by the editor of the *Crypt*. As that very obscure periodical is not to be found, except by luck, outside the great libraries, and as some readers may have been cut off from access to it since the outbreak of war, it may be useful to state the case in fuller detail. The editor of the *Crypt*, unaware that the poem had ever been published before, supplied the following introductory note:

The M.S. of the following poem (on a subject of most interesting applicability to certain braggadocios) was formerly in the possession of the great Thomas Warton, to whom it probably passed from his brother, the school-fellow and friend of Collins. In that family, we understand, it has always passed as a youthful production of the "Cicestrian Bard;" it bears the appearance of a school exercise, written out for the Master's inspection. If such it be, however, and the date of 1747 be that of the original composition, all claim to it on the part of the poet Collins must give way, as he quitted Winchester for Oxford, in 1740. Under this difficulty, an application was lately made to the Bishop of Hereford, the present Warden of Winchester College, by whose kindness we have obtained a list of every boy of that name admitted into the School within seventeen years of the above date; and we do not hesitate to decide, that to none of them is there any reasonable probability for attributing the verses in question. Whether, therefore, it be, or be not, a school performance, the date must be rather assigned to the time when the transcript was made, and the tradition in favour of William Collins be permitted, in lack of more substantial authority, to predominate.

Then follows the text of the poem. At the end is the signature "Collins, Jun. 1747," with no initials.

It is very true, as the editor admits, that the date 1747 presents a most formidable difficulty, and the conjecture that it may be merely the date of transcription has the weakness of all conjectures in the presence of facts. Had the editor been aware that the poem had appeared in print nine years earlier, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1738, his last doubt would have been removed. He would certainly have announced in unqualified terms that the poem was the authentic work of Collins, and there is no apparent reason why we should not adopt that conclusion.

The following notes refer to poems usually accepted as Collins's by modern editors, on grounds which I think insufficient.

1. 'To Miss Aurelia C——r.'

This poem appeared originally in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1739 (p. 41), over the signature "Amasius," and was afterwards republished as the work of Collins in Fawkes and Woty's 'Poetical Calendar.' Dr. Johnson, mainly on the authority of Fawkes and Woty, quoted it at length, at the conclusion of his 'Life' of Collins, as "Mr. Collins's first production." Johnson himself had remarked in a letter to John Nichols that "Amasius was at that time the poetical name of Dr. Swan," and there are other poems in the *Gentleman's Magazine* over the same signature. There can be no doubt that to Swan the credit or discredit for the verses is due. Birkbeck Hill, who gives the evidence exhaustively, expresses some regret that a composition formerly included among Collins's poems "must no longer appear in that graceful company."¹⁷⁷ Most readers who consider the quality of the poem will feel it an act of justice to Collins to restore it to its true author.

2. "Young Damon of the Vale is Dead."

It has come to be accepted as an article of faith rather than a rational conclusion that Collins was the author of a rimed triviality entitled 'Song. The Sentiments Borrowed from Shakespeare,' and more conveniently denoted by its first line, "Young Damon of the Vale is dead." In 1922 Mr. A. D. McKillop pointed out that Beloe, a person likely to be well informed, printed the poem in the *Sesagenarian* as the work of Henry Headley.¹⁷⁸ The following year Mr. McKillop drew attention to its appearance in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1788,¹⁷⁹ where it is introduced by the following letter:

Feb. 2.

Mr. Urban,

In turning over your Magazine, for May, 1765, I observe a copy of most elegant verses by Collins, which are not to be found in any edition of his poems. The following lines are to the best of my knowledge in the same predicament, and I believe have never yet appeared in print.

Yours, &c.

C—T—O.

It is difficult to understand how anyone reading this letter with reasonable care can take it as evidence that "the following lines" are also by Collins. Nothing could have been easier, if that had been the meaning intended,

than to insert some such phrase as " by the same author," and in the absence of any such phrase it is a clear misstatement of fact to speak of the letter as " definitely attributing the authorship to Collins."¹⁸⁰

We are able, fortunately, to identify " C—T—O." He was none other than Henry Headley,¹⁸¹ who, as we have seen, was given credit for the ' Song ' by a man who had every right to speak with authority. It appears, then, that it was Headley himself who sent the poem to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In the light of this knowledge the allusion to Collins admits of an explanation. We must remember that the young Headley, a scholar and poet of great promise, had that fastidious literary sense which would be likely to reject the machine-made phrases imposed by convention upon contributors to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and finds its natural refuge in light irony. The customary formula was something like this: " Mr. Urban,—The enclosed copy of verses never having been printed, if you think them worthy of a place in your esteemed magazine, it will oblige Yours, etc." A man of taste and originality could not be expected to drive his pen along that hard-worn groove. Headley does not disdain to follow the recognised convention, but he refuses to be a slave to it. Referring to the verses in the volume for 1765, he says, in effect: " If the fact that this poem had not formerly been published was thought a sufficient reason for publishing it, let me offer you one which has, so far as I know, precisely that qualification for admission to your columns."

There is one apparent difficulty in the way of this interpretation, but it is by no means so formidable as it appears at first sight. The qualifying phrases " to the best of my knowledge " and " I believe " show that Headley was in doubt whether the poem had ever been printed or not, and that, it may be said, is an indication that he could not himself have been the author. That would be a fair argument in the conditions of to-day, but not in those of the later eighteenth century. The demand for light verse must have been greater at that time than it has ever been before or since, and there was very little regard for the rights of literary property. A person who came upon an elegant or ingenious trifle in manuscript would usually consider himself at liberty to publish it without asking the author's permission, and if the author had distributed copies freely, among friends of various degrees of intimacy, he might well be

unable to give an unqualified assurance that the poem had never appeared in print.

It is probable that Headley had a special reason for caution besides these general considerations. It appears that three years earlier he had placed a collection of poems in the hands of John Nichols, to whom he had allowed a wide discretion. We find him writing to Nichols on May 13, 1785:

When you have inserted the alteration which the gentleman whom I employed to call on you mentioned, my wish is that you would send me a copy of the "Fugitive Pieces," that the Errata may be printed with it. As I have no particular knowledge of any bookseller in town, I would wish you to put the book into any respectable hands you chuse, and manage that matter entirely for me.¹⁸²

We know that 'Fugitive Pieces' was published anonymously before the end of 1785, and the 'Song' is not found among the contents. It is possible that Headley had expected it to appear with the rest, and that Nichols had either omitted it accidentally or excluded it in the exercise of his discretion. However that may be, it is certain that Headley wished to see the poem in print in 1788, but was not prepared to say with entire certainty that it had not formerly found its way into some obscure periodical. Actually, as the late Professor Bronson noticed, it was printed in the *Public Advertiser* on Mar. 7, 1788, within a month of its appearance in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Perhaps that is the belated realisation of the possibility indicated by the qualifying phrases.

3. "Written on a Paper, which contained a Piece of Bride Cake."

This is the poem to which Headley referred in the letter quoted in the previous note. Its first known appearance was in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1765, as Headley tells us. There it is said to be "by the late Mr. Collins"; but the authority for the statement is not disclosed, and, having regard to Collins's increasing popularity and to the common practice of the time, we are justified in suspecting that it is mere guesswork. The second known publication, again under Collins's name, was in Pearch's 'Collection of Poems' (2nd edition, 1770, Vol. ii., p. 16), the source, presumably, being the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Professor Bronson, who was unaware "on what evidence this poem was ascribed to Collins," decided to place it among the early poems "wholly on internal evidence," as it seemed to him "to belong to the poet's younger and mildly amorous muse." It must be remembered that Bronson accepted as genuine the lines 'To Miss

Aurelia C——r' and 'Young Damon of the Vale is dead.' In the absence of those two trifles there is no sufficient evidence that Collins's muse was ever mildly amorous.

From what has been said it will be seen that the case for Collins's authorship rests ultimately on the unsupported testimony of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Collins was by no means reticent about his literary projects, and it is difficult to believe that a poem of some length—and especially a youthful poem, as Bronson supposes this one to be—could have remained hidden till six years after his death without our hearing of its existence in manuscript even by a rumour. The probability is that, if Collins had been the author, the manuscript would have been destroyed long before it could have found its mysterious way to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, unless it had been preserved by some collector of such treasures like Alexander Carlyle.

It is possible that these objections may be met by some further discovery yet to be made; but the evidence available at present is not nearly strong enough to justify the inclusion of the poem among works of proved authenticity.

P. L. CARVER.

177 Johnson's 'Letters,' Vol. ii, p. 185.

178 *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. xxxvii, p.

181. Mr. McKillop refers to the *Sexagenarian* (1817), Vol. i, pp. 178-9.

It may be added that Beloe makes an earlier allusion to Headley in his 'Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books' (Vol. i, p. 240), where he concludes a short appreciative paragraph with the words: "I am happy in this opportunity of paying a tribute of esteem and affection to his memory, for I knew him well." The voluntary testimony of a man who could write in those terms is not to be lightly set aside.

179 *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. xxxviii, pp. 184-5.

180 E. G. Ainsworth, 'Poor Collins,' p. 7, note 11.

181 Henry Kett, in the 'Biographical Sketch' prefixed his edition (1810) of Headley's 'Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry,' says: "He was an occasional contributor of ingenious pieces to the *Gentleman's Magazine* under the signature of C.T.O." A 'Sonnet to Miss Aiken' signed with these initials will be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1786 (p. 250), and some lines 'To the Memory of Miss Lucy S——' in the number for November, 1785 (p. 906). See also the account of Headley in the 'D.N.B.'

182 Nichols, 'Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century,' Vol. iv. p. 745.



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